1989

ASGC

2012

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The Official Journal Of

THE ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKAN GRADUATES OF CANADA

இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் — கனடா





Presenters & Audience
Career Counseling Workshop - Markham

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www.asgc.ca





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ASGC MISSION STATEMENT

By providing a Forum to the Graduates of Sri Lankan origin in Canada for meeting, interacting, and sharing of academic and professional expertise and experience, ASGC will help identify and address problems of common concern to the Sri Lankan Community in general and of the Graduates entering the job market and the Undergraduates in Sri Lanka in particular, and become one of the most respected provider of valuable service to the Canadian Community at large.

The aims and objectives of ASGC include:

♦ ***Playing a leadership role in promoting charitableness and voluntarism in the Sri Lankan community in general, and among the graduates in particular, and focus on channeling their organized efforts in identifying and addressing problems in the areas of graduate employment and youth education;***

♦ ***Rendering all possible assistance to new immigrants, who are new to the Canadian job market, including getting recognition of their qualifications and finding jobs in which their expertise and experience would be recognized, and facilitating their smooth settlement in Canada;***

♦ ***Organizing meetings and seminars aimed at improving and enhancing the knowledge and understanding of subjects of interest and importance to the Sri Lankan community in general and to the Graduates in particular;***

♦ ***Organizing and delivery of support and assistance to the Universities and students in North and East of Sri Lanka with books, computers, teaching aids and materials etc, and offering helps for programs aimed at helping students and undergraduates;***

♦ ***Organizing events and activities focusing on finding solutions to problems of serious concern surfacing in the Sri Lankan Community from time to time; and***

♦ ***Organizing events and activities that would help bring out the hidden talents, expertise and experience of Sri Lankan Graduates in the service of the Canadian society at large.***



Standing (L-R): S.Sivanayagamoorthy, V.Manivannan, Thaves Ponnampalam,Harindra Sebastian(Asst.Secretary), Ramachandran Samy.

Seated (L-R): Suganja Sinnathamby, C.Ramanathan, Bala Elayathamby, Yaso Somalingam (President), Raj Thavaratnasingam (Secretary), Pon Balendran, K.Theivendirarajah

Absent: Yoga Arulnamby (Vice-President), Theeben Jegatheesan, Nel Ketharanathan (Asst. Treasurer), Thiva Kulasingam (Treasurer), Kuna Kunasegaram, Sathy Thurairajah

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is with great pleasure and pride I write this message on behalf of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada's (ASGC) 23rd annual dinner celebration. We have concluded another successful year of community service with the assistance and hard work of our members. This year was not only busy, but it was also a colossal and vibrant year! As usual, ASGC introduced young graduates to the community and I have personally witnessed another year of their immense contribution. By providing opportunities for volunteerism, ASGC has paved the way for graduates, post-secondary students and high school students to achieve great new accomplishments. Our executive committee members are very proud of their hard work throughout the year and we are glad to join with all of you to celebrate ASGC's accomplishment.

ASGC has been the leading association of graduates in Canada, serving the Sri Lankan community for more than 23 years. The programs and activities have always been, and continue to focus on providing a forum and network for graduates of Sri Lankan origin who have obtained their qualifications either in Sri Lanka and/or in Canada. These programs enable our community to meet, learn, and harness our collective experience, wisdom, charitableness and, above all, exhibit our penchant for volunteerism to benefit the Canadian community in general, and the Sri Lankan community in particular.

There are many other organizations in our community that concentrate on our major political issues. Sometimes however, we forget to look after our own backyard. If our children are not guided and encouraged in a proper manner, the hard work on all other social and political avenues will be put to waste. An investment in education cannot be underestimated and will definitely be an asset for the brighter future of our community. ASGC's goal is to elevate the overall profile of our community by assisting with the acquisition of good education skills, career counseling for the high school students, and aiding in the exploring and networking for job opportunities for university graduates. Our association strongly feels that our community will be well represented amongst Canadians by acquiring a high-level of education skills and holding professional employments. This will not only create an elevated profile for the community, but will also make a great impact on our position and perception at all different levels of the Government in Canada and also towards the international community.

The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada has grown to its present stature through the dedicated efforts and personal commitments of the past and present executive members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all past Presidents and the Executive Committee members of ASGC for their dedication and continuous commitment to uplift our community with colossal growth and richness. Your efforts have not been and will not be wasted. Our community has already witnessed the results of your hard work. It is amazing to see the extent of ASGC's growth in this short period of time. However, there are still grounds for ASGC to reach higher levels. By celebrating our past success and conferring new enthusiasm and energy, we can start fresh and jump a few more milestones in the upcoming years.

I am truly privileged to be part of this association. The satisfaction obtained by serving this organization as the President is immeasurable. Let me end my experience by thanking today's guests, all dedicated volunteers, well wishers, financial supporters and friends who are here to celebrate our past success, and welcome a fresh start for the upcoming year.

President
Yaso Somalingam B. Sc. (BE) Arch.

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FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY - ASGC - Raj Thavartnasingham



A wave of Sri Lankan Tamils started arriving in Canada as sponsored immigrants and refugees in the late 1980s after ethnic violence erupted in Sri Lanka. Many who arrived had some form of higher education but found it difficult to adjust to the new country and overcome the biggest barrier-obtaining a job. Many graduates at that time also found that their degrees were not recognized in Canada and so had to start life all over again. To overcome these struggles, a group of some graduates decided to organize themselves to make life better for everyone. The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) first began in 1989 as a non profit organization of persons living in Canada who had graduated from Sri Lankan universities. The aim of the ASGC was to help universities in Sri Lanka and integrate with various organizations in Canada in order to have their degrees and diplomas recognized as equivalent to a particular level in Canada. They were immensely successful in this effort and many graduates in various fields who have succeeded in holding higher positions in Canada forever owe gratitude to the ASGC for clearing a big hurdle that was prevalent at that time.

Having served a very useful purpose in settling graduates who migrated, the ASGC realized that the high school students of the (Tamil) community needed guidance/help in their career selection and encouragement to perform volunteer service to the community. In addition, ASGC also wanted to provide a forum to graduates of Sri Lankan origin in Canada for the meeting, interacting & sharing of academic and professional expertise and experience. Another area we wanted to develop was to promote and aide in identifying concerns to the Sri Lankan community, and attempting to rectify them.

From the 1990s to the present, the ASGC has served the community in many ways, the most important being conducting career counselling sessions for high school students for over ten years. The major activities are summarised below:

o Conducting annual career counselling sessions for grade nine to twelve students. The ASGC has held such sessions with the Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board & York Region District School Board. The most recent held in October 2011 with the YRDSB attracted over 300 students and parents. The series of workshops involves bringing successful recent graduates who are currently working to interact with high school students so that the students may clear their doubts about following a career path. Over the past many years over four thousands students and parents have been benefitted from these sessions. Some attendees have graduated and come back to give their input to the new students. In 2011 there were 28 youths who devoted their time to come and speak to students and parents.

o Playing a leadership role in promoting philanthropy and volunteerism, for many years in the past, the ASGC organized a volunteer car wash program to raise money for charity.

o Organizing seminars aimed at improving and enhancing the knowledge of subjects of interests and importance to the community in general and the graduates in particular, including computer programming courses and contests, career fairs & opportunities for networking, and professional counselling for new immigrants, etc. The most recent one was "Job Connect 2012" that was held in April 2012 mainly aimed at connecting new graduates with work places.

o In line with the aims and objectives, the ASGC also has a mentorship program to render the community all possible assistance to gain access into professions that suit their education and experience. The ASGC has built up a list of volunteers who are currently employed senior professionals and have many years of work experience in Canada.

FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY CONTD...

The guidance includes, but is not limited to, recommendation of suitable part time courses for updating credentials, preparation of job application documents, a review of the procedures involved in getting membership with the appropriate professional body, connecting to a network of professionals, continuously monitoring the graduate's success and modifying the strategy until the mentee gets a suitable job in the specific profession. .

o In the past, ASGC has been collecting series of old Canadian textbooks and have been sending them to Sri Lankan universities for their use. In addition the Association sponsored a few poor children in Sri Lankan Universities helping them financially to continue and complete their undergraduate studies.

o Organizing events and activities focusing on finding solutions to problems of concern surfacing in the Sri Lankan Community from time to time, including mental health seminar.

o Organizing events and activities that would help bring out the hidden talents, expertise, and experience of Sri Lankan Graduates in the service of the Canadian society at large through other event

o Solicited donation from our members soon after Tsunami and coordinated with Red Cross to ensure that these funds were directed for relief in Tamil areas in Sri Lanka. Also when Tamil refugees were detained in Camps in Vanni without adequate food and other facilities, ASGC raised funds and sent through Red Cross Canada.

o Made our voice heard and the suffering of the Tamils in 2009 during the last phase of the war, and asserted our position by giving evidence to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) on Sri Lanka. Followed this up with an all day exhibition called "Tamil Awareness Day" in May 2009 that was held at the Scarborough Civic Centre complete with a panel discussion.

o Conducted many letter writing campaign to the government of Canada and the following paragraph in the letter dated October 31, 2011 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ASGC shows we are being heard. "Canada is deeply concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka. The Canadian Government's primary request of the Government of Sri Lanka is to make substantive progress in terms of political reconciliation and accountability, and to engage constructively with the international community in addressing the country's underlying source of conflict. The Canadian Government continues to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to establish an independent investigation into credible allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed by both sides of the conflict in Sri Lanka."

As one may note from the information provided above, the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada has had a positive impact on the lives of thousands of Sri Lankans in Canada over the course of the last twenty years and we will continue to do so in the future. Through efforts designed to aid in the transition between Sri Lanka and Canada, the ASGC has affected the lives of both immigrants to Canada, and Sri Lankan youth who were born and raised here.

All the above would not have been possible without the individuals who against all odds started the Association in 1989. This was then followed by numerous individuals who helped with the growth of the Association. We would not be in this position without the support and dedication of our past Executive Committees and volunteers. We salute you for your service!

House of Commons



28 May 2012

Rathika Sitsabaiesan
Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge River

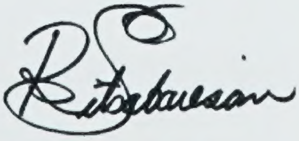
A Personal Message from Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

I am delighted to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada's (ASGC) annual celebration. This is a wonderful time to gather as a community and recognize our mutual accomplishments. The valuable knowledge and expertise imparted by the members of ASGC has made an impact on the young students. Your efforts in bringing the community together to invest in the well being and successes of young people as part of the larger Canadian community is crucial to the vitalization and vibrancy of Canada.

I extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to the members of ASGC, staff and volunteers for your dedication and commitment to the community. I am sincerely grateful for all your hard work.

Sincerely,



Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP
Scarborough-Rouge River

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MARKHAM

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor

June 2, 2012

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Members of Council and the Town of Markham, I am pleased to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all those attending the 2012 Dinner Dance hosted by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC).

Cultural diversity is one of our community's greatest assets and I commend the ASGC for providing a friendly forum where graduates of Sir Lankan origin can share their experience and learn from one another in both their academic and professional pursuits. Through motivation and encouragement, you are helping to promote entrepreneurship in the Sri Lankan Canadian Community as well as strengthening your competitiveness in the global market.

As you enjoy the congenial atmosphere of this dinner/dance, you can take great pride in your commitment to the well being of your community. When we work together, we create a better future for us all.

As Mayor, I am proud of your efforts and I am delighted to have this opportunity to extend my best wishes for a most enjoyable evening and for continued success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor



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MARKHAM



June 2nd 2012.

Logan Kanapathi
Councillor, Ward 7

MESSAGE FROM MARKHAM

I would like to congratulate the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) for their tremendous and very valuable support to the community and extend my best wishes to everyone attending their Dinner Dance on Jun 2, 2012.

Grass roots organizations are vital for engaging communities in productive activities to improve the quality of life. ASGC has been playing that role very well over the past 23 years! I truly appreciate the members of ASGC for dedicating their valuable time in sharing academic and professional expertise and experience. I have first hand witnessed the highly successful career counselling workshops you provide for the youth especially the high school children. As such, I would like to thank the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada for creating these important outlets for our youth to obtain direction and network to succeed in their career goals.

As Councillor, I am very proud of your efforts in sharing knowledge and assisting young people with their career dreams. I wish you all the best for your future endeavours, and look forward to seeing your organization grow and flourish in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Logan Kanapathi
Councillor Ward 7

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DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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June 2, 2012

Greetings on Behalf of the York Region District School Board

On behalf of the York Region District School Board, I would like to offer my best wishes to the participants and organizers of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada annual dinner and dance.

I would also like to recognize the work of the association in supporting the career counseling and success of young people across York Region.

York Region is one of the most diverse areas in Canada, and as such, our Board's schools and workplaces reflect a broad spectrum of cultures, religions and nations. Our rich composition also makes York Region one of the most vibrant communities in Canada.

York Region District School Board respects and celebrates the diversity reflected throughout our schools, workplaces and communities and is deeply committed to the principles of equity and inclusivity in all of our programs and practices.

Congratulations and best wishes to everyone who played a role in supporting our youth and in the annual dinner and dance event. Your efforts are greatly respected and appreciated.

Ken Thurston
Director of Education
York Region District School Board


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CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MARKHAM 2011

In keeping with its commitment to promoting higher education among Tamil youths, yet another Career Counseling Workshop for High School Students was organized by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) in partnership with the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and the Canadian Tamil Alumni Association (CTAA). This extremely useful event for high school students and their parents was held on Saturday October 29, 2011from 10 am till 4 pm at Middlefield Collegiate Institute. As usual, ASGC conducted the event free of charge and provided free lunch to about 300 students and parents who attended the workshop.

The plenary session of the workshop started with the welcome speech by theASGC President Mr. Yaso Somalingam. Following the welcome speech, Mr. Cecil Roach, Superintendent of Education expressed YRDSB's happiness in supporting such an excellent workshop and appreciated the services provided by ASGC to the high school students. Thereafter an inspirational keynote address was made by Dr. Meera Selvakone of Pinnacle Health Sciences Centre and York Central Hospital. In her address Dr. Selvakone highlighted the importance of the workshop to students and parents in introducing career goals and suggesting paths to achieve these goals. She told the parents that the children may not follow the career paths they have chosen, but children are going to listen to the parents' advice and will need their support. Also she emphasized the important role of parents in guiding their children which cannot be underestimated or taken for granted. Meera related to students by reflecting on her own experience of growing up in Vancouver. A final word of her advice to the students was to research all of the opportunities before coming up with a decision on a career choice and to be prepared to change as conditions change.

Ms. Suganja Sinnathamby, Workshop Co-ordinator, while explaining the format of the workshop said that two sessions, one in the morning and other in the afternoon would cover fields of study: Life Science, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Social & Business Studies. Each field of study would be addressed by 6 or 7 guest speakers, chosen on the basis of their academic and professional success. The students would be able to ask questions and the discussions would take place in an informal and friendly atmosphere. She also mentioned that the parents would have a separate session to deal with the issues specific to parents. Mr. Thaves Ponnampalam and Mr. Sukeevan Kailayapathy briefly introduced all the presenters to the audience. The list of presenters with their qualification and their places of work are given at the end of this article.

The high school students were able to receive vital information about the selection of courses and the career paths of different professions from the young graduates in the Tamil community. Similarly parents collected very valuable information from a panel of speakers who have been involved with parent-school-community issues.

Finally all the students and parents gathered in the main auditorium for summary and recap of the discussions. The moderators of each group presented a summary of the items discussed in their sessions. The panel of presenters and moderators answered the questions raised by the participants. Towards the end certificates were presented by ASGC to the presenters and to the volunteers in appreciation of their contribution.

CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP CONTD....

The workshop ended with a vote of thanks delivered by the secretary of ASGC, Mr. Raj Thavaratnasingam. The students really appreciated having the opportunity to get presenter's advice and to listen to their experiences.

Workshop Speakers (for students)		
Life Sciences	**Engineering & Applied Sciences**	**Social & Business Studies**
MODERATORS Sharmila Sathiasothy B. Sc., M.Sc. Sandra Sabaratnam B.Sc.	MODERATOR Thiva Kulasingam B.Math	MODERATOR Thaves Ponnampalam B.A.Sc.
Subhani Ragunathan B.Sc. (Medical Student, Univ. of Toronto)	Tharshan Thothiralingam B.A.Sc. (AMD Inc.)	Saran Ragunathan LLB (Fraser Milner Casgarin LLP)
Shivajan Sivapalan B.Sc., M.D. (Medical Resident, Univ. of Toronto)	Ajantha Kumarasingam B. Arch. Sc. (Staples Canada Home Office)	Rohan Thiru CA, CFA, MAcc (Royal Bank)
Jonathan Bertram B.Sc., M.D. (Medical Resident, Univ. of Toronto)	Anu Kanagasabai B.Eng. (Hydro One)	Prashanth Srichandramohan B.A. (City of markham)
Jeyagobi Jeyaratnam B.Kin.,B.A.,MPH (Centre for Research on Inner CityHealth)	Ara Ehambaram B.A.Sc., MBA (Polarius Technologies Inc.)	Kuyili Dhanabalan B.Sc., B.Ed. (Parkland PS, YRDSB)
Ranjith Mahendranathan B.P.H.E., D.C. (Westney Spine Care & Wellness Centre)	Theeben Rajkumar B.Sc. (Hydro One)	Nandha Gunaratnam B.A., B.Soc.Sc. (Porobation and Parole Office)
Radika Koneswaran B. Sc. (Probation and Parole Office)	Vaitheki Tharmaratnam B.Sc., B.Ed. (Accenture)	Piraveena Tharmalingam B.Math, (TD Bank)
Theepana Singarajah B.Sc.N. (Sunnybrook Hospital)	Gajan Ganeshavadivelu B.Eng, (Ciena)	Gajane Sasitharan BBA (Human Resources Management Candidate)
Laxee Nithiyananthan B.Sc., M.Sc. (Sudbury Regional Hospital)	Nirojini Nalliah B.Eng. (Environmental Engineering)	Ann Leung B.Sc., HRM (REENA – Non Profit Organization)

The Parents' Session was chaired by Mrs. Suganja Sinnathamby B.Eng., B.Ed. , Teacher at Maple HS. YRDSB and formerly Student & Community Liaison Teacher, YRDSB

The Panel Speakers involved in the Parents' session are:

Ms. Lori Russell	Financial Aid Officer & University Works Coordinator, University of Ontario Institute of technology
Mr. Pas Paskaran	Retired Lecturer, Northern Alberta Institute Technology
Mr. Thiva Paramasothy	Chair, Board of Directors, CANTYD
Mr. Yaso Somalingam	Director, CANTAM Group Ltd.
Mr. Kuna Kunasegaran	Senior Hardware Design Engineer, Honeywell Inc.

Esa Completes Twelve Years As A Realtor
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Esa receiving the President's Award – 2010 from Mr. Andrew Cimmerman, Founder & CEO of Homelife International



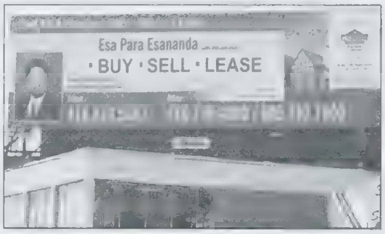
Esa receiving
Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award in 2011
(The People's Choice Award)



Esa receiving the Civic Service Award - 2007 from Ms.Dorothy Mason,President of Toronto Real Estate Board

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Testimonials

Esa Para is a unique giver, a one of a kind real estate broker. Homelife is very fortunate to have a member who is actively involved in helping so many others in the community. We are proud to be associated with him and having him part of our member network. With sincere appreciation, we wish to congratulate Esa on his goodwill work and for being an exemplary Homelife member

Mr. Andrew Cimmerman, Founder & CEO of Homelife International

Esa is one of over 450 Real Estate Representatives/Brokers working for my brokerage Homelife Superstars Real Estate Ltd in Toronto,Brampton and Mississauga Esa brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the job and is always willing to help his fellow realtors. Esa's honesty, integrity, excellent service combined with dedication, commitment and sheer hard work have been the key to his continued success Congratulations Esa!

Mr. Paul Randhawa – Broker of Record - Homelife Superstars Real Estate Ltd

Articulate, persuasive, ability to deal effectively with people from all walks of life this in a nutshell is how I would describe Esa. His professionalism and continued commitment to clients is known to lawyers and clients alike. Best wishes

Thelma Williams, Barrister & Solicitor

Within few days he was able to find a home that we liked and negotiated a good price and the closing date, which was important to us. He was able to arrange the mortgage, home inspector and the lawyer and made our life easy in finding the right house He was very flexible with his timings and made himself available to suit our convenience. We saw in him a lively personality, knowledgeable and good negotiating skills. Esa had a good understanding of our needs. We are pleased with his service and will not hesitate to recommend him to anyone

Dennis J. Rice & Sylvia Rice

House was listed and sold within a week, for 100% of asking price after multiple offers!!!! Service was excellent and professional, always available to answer questions or concerns. For first time sellers it is a very smooth and comfortable process. Thanks Esa."

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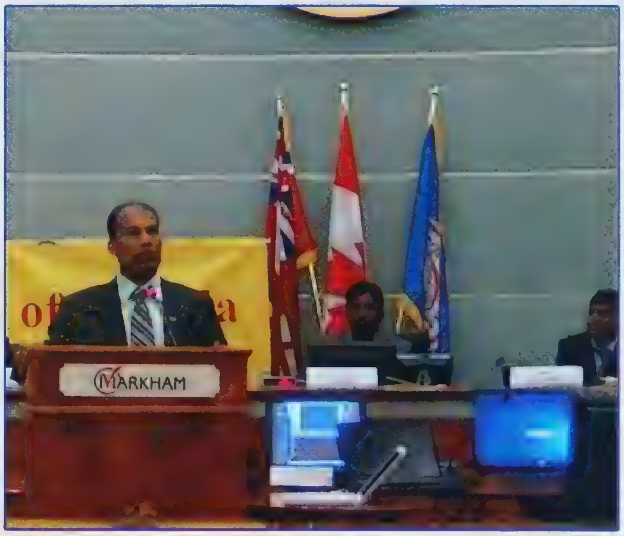






JOB CONNECT













JOB CONNECT 2012

Job Connect was an event organized by ASGC in partnership with the Canadian Tamil Alumni Association (CTAA). It was held at Markham Town Civic Centre on Saturday, April 28, 2012 from 10 am till 2 pm. The main objective of this event was to connect recent university graduates with senior professionals from various fields. This networking opportunity provided information on job trends, most sought after competencies, career guidance and the ins and outs of vertical industries. The keynote address was delivered by Umesh Vallipuram, Vice President of Corporate Development at Affiliated Managers Group (AMG). This was followed by a very inspiring and energetic speech on job searching strategies by Ahalya Kumaran, the Career Coach and founder of InnerOli. The next presenter, Dr. Thas Yuwaraj, Vice President of product development at Tornado systems, gave an informative presentation on product development experiences in medical device industry. He emphasized the importance of mentors for those who are interested in pursuing a career in research. Then Sasidaran Logarajah, an electrical engineer and a seasoned professional from Honeywell Systems Limited, gave a presentation on the competencies and behaviours that companies look for in an employee. He also highlighted various approaches and techniques employed at Honeywell to evaluate employers' performance.

After a short refreshment and networking break, the event resumed with the panel discussion. Following is the list of professionals who took part in the discussion:

Panel Speakers

Mr.Sathiamoorthy Sinnathamby Project Manager, SNC Lavalin	Mr. Ramesh Vivekanandarajah Lab Supervisor, Contract Pharmaceuticals Ltd
Mr.Arul Thiagarajah Asset Management Coordinator Works- Facilities Management, Durham	Mr. Sujeether Paramaswaran Director, John Hancock Retirement Plans Services, Manulife
Ms. Kay Nguyen Principal Legal Counsel Kia Canada Inc.	Mr. Sonny Oswal Vice President, Technology Group Citibank Canada
Mr. Thiva Kulasingam Solution Delivery manager Rogers Communication Inc.	Mr. Harindra Sebastian Consulting Actuary Towers Watson
Mr. Gajan Ganeshavadivel Software Engineer, Ciena	Ms. Tharsiny Varapragasam Teacher, Peel District Scool Board

The panel discussion started with a brief presentation by each of the panel members about their professions. This was followed by a highly interactive question and answer session. The audience enthusiastically participated in the discussion and exchanged ideas related to job search and professional development. At the end, Dr. K. Theivendirarajah delivered a charismatic vote of thanks in which he listed and thanked all those who supported ASGC in organizing and conducting this event. ◊◊◊

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards 2012



Volunteers play a very important role in our quality of life. They help to build a safe and caring community by donating their valuable time. In fact, Ontarians donate more than five million hours of their time each year to organizations and communities across the province.

The Ontario Volunteer Service Award recognizes individual volunteers for continuous years of commitment and dedicated service to an organization. Adults are recognized for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30+, 40+, 50+ and 60+ years of continuous service. Youth (under the age of 24) are recognized for two or more years of continuous service.

Both adult and youth nominees must not have received payment for their volunteer work, must be active beyond simple membership in an organization and must not have performed the services as part of their regular business or professional duties. These awards are an important way to recognize volunteers by the Government of Ontario.

ASGC was delighted when six of our members and a youth volunteer were recognized and awarded this Service Awards in 2012. Recipients were:

Dr. V. Manivannan (10), Dr. Subramaniam Sivanayagamoorthy (10), Ramachandran Samy (5), Sunganja Sinnathamby (5), Pon Balendran (5), Kuna Kunasegeram (5) & Kanastana Yasotharan (2 - youth volunteer). Congratulations to all of them.

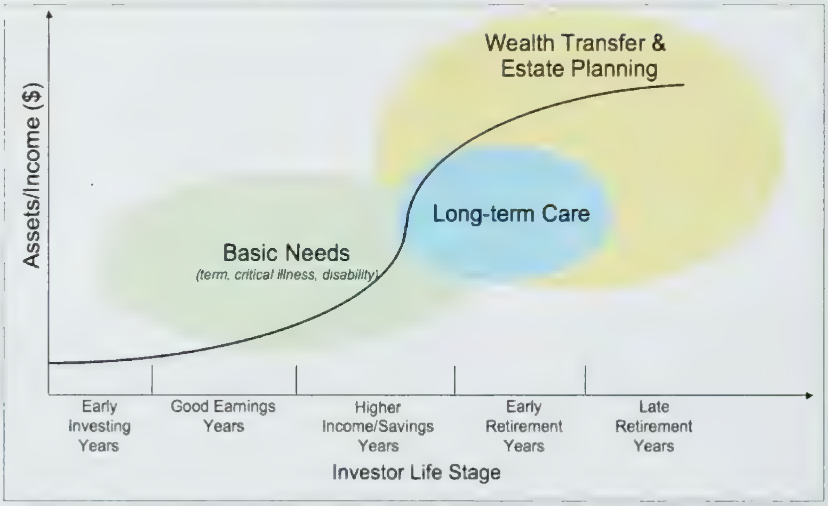
CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE INSURANCE

With our busy lives and natural inclination to avoid contemplating the worst, it can be easy to avoid those "what if" thoughts about unforeseen death or disability. However, you need to put appropriate protection strategies in place to help ensure that unfortunate circumstances don't cause financial hardships for you, your family or your business.

Getting started is often the hardest step. To help you address your needs, Edward Jones offers the following types of insurance and explains how each can help meet your needs.

The Need	The Solution	The Potential Result
Help offset the financial loss for loved ones or a business if you should die unexpectedly	Personal or business term or permanent life insurance	Helps family members or your business carry on financially
Help meet your estate preservation needs for your family or business in the event of your death	Personal or business permanent life insurance	Helps preserve your personal or business assets and transfer them to your heirs
Help offset lost income in the event of a serious disability for you, your family or business	Personal or business disability income insurance	Helps you, your family or your business survive financially as you recover
Help offset expenses for you, your family or your business while recovering from a critical illness	Personal or business critical illness insurance	Helps you, your family or your business survive financially as you focus on recovering
Help offset the expenses of daily care should you become unable to care for yourself	Personal long-term care insurance	Helps provide funds to get the proper care you need

In addition, keep in mind that as your income level and life stage change, so do your insurance needs. Use the following chart to better understand where your insurance needs align.



Source: Edward Jones. The above is for illustration only.

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INSURANCE A KEY ELEMENT OF YOUR FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- Raj Thavaratnasingham -

Did you know that in nearly half of Canadian households, the primary wage earner reported that if he or she died, surviving family members would have immediate trouble meeting everyday living expenses or be unable to cover expenses beyond only a few months? That survey finding from LIMRA, an industry association representing life insurance and financial services companies, reflects how millions of Canadians are either uninsured or underinsured, and are overlooking an important aspect of their overall financial situation.

Think about what would happen if you unexpectedly passed away today. Who would pay for your funeral and your family's monthly bills? Who would pay your monthly mortgage payment and other outstanding debts? How would your children's future education be funded? And would your family be able to compensate for your lost paycheque, which would be gone forever?

It all points to the importance of insurance, which can provide money in a timely manner when you need it to offset lost earnings to your household or business in the event of death or disability. Quite simply, without adequate insurance coverage, your loved ones could face catastrophic consequences.

You could approach insurance in a way that you might look at investments. That is, while diversification does not guarantee a profit or protect against loss, it's a time-proven strategy for many successful investors, whereby they make sure they have representation from different asset classes for their investments. In a similar way, you'll want a carefully constructed insurance portfolio that contains different types to address different possibilities and to match your particular needs.
For example, you'll likely want to have permanent life insurance solutions to meet requirements that exist no matter what age you pass away, such as funeral and burial costs, medical or emergency costs, and taxes on registered assets and capital gains.

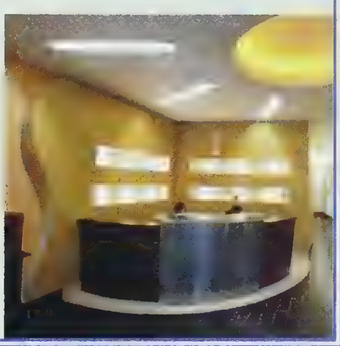
Term insurance solutions might be best used to meet any particular temporary needs you could have, such as clearing your mortgage or replacing your income until your children are old enough to be self-sufficient.

You also need to ask yourself about how you can protect your family if you're unable to work because of disability or illness. According to the Society of Actuaries, a 40-year-old in Canada has a 35-per-cent chance of suffering a long-term disability lasting 90 days or longer, making disability and critical illness very important.

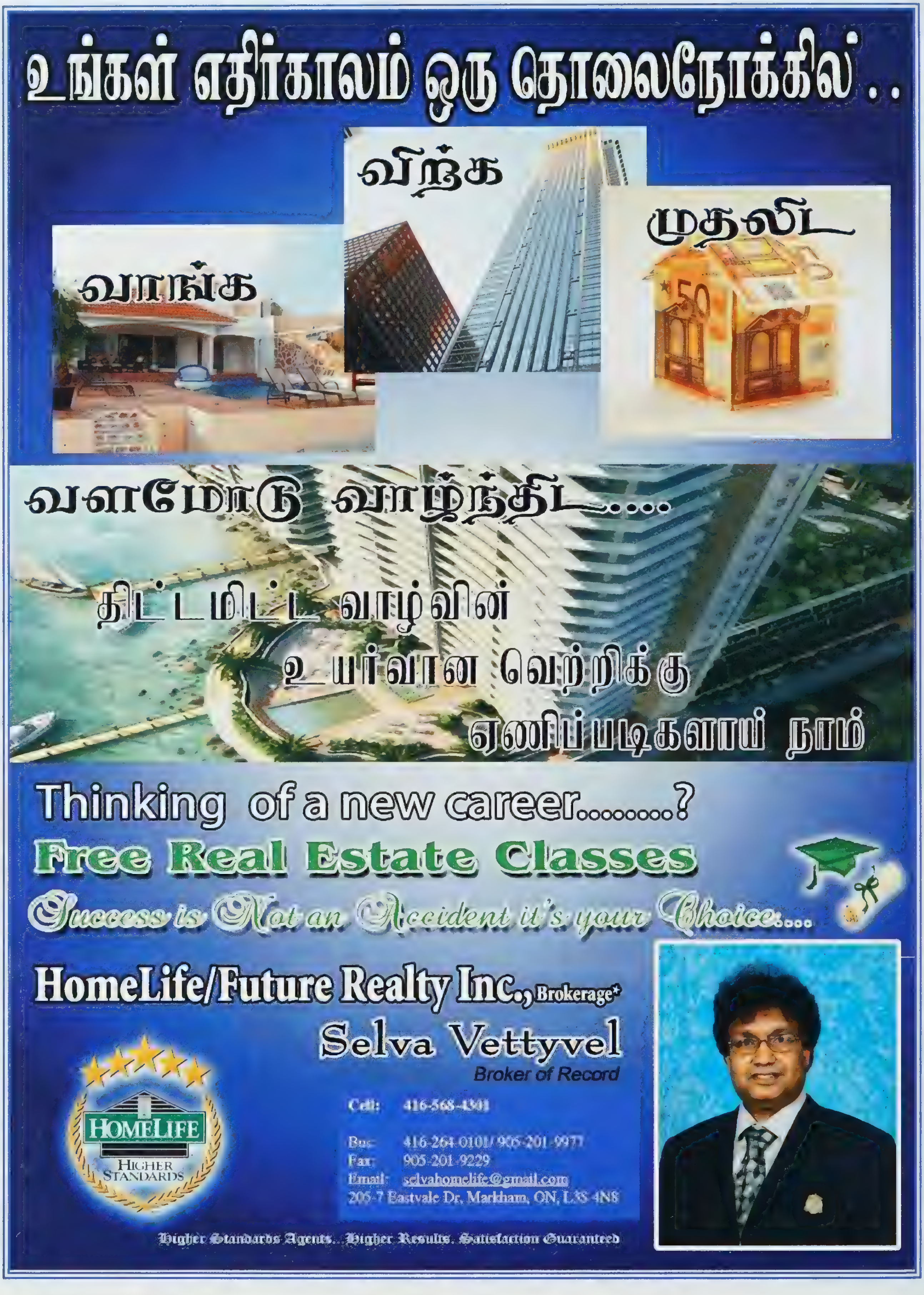
There are a number of questions you should ask yourself about disability insurance. For instance, what coverage does your employer provide and what are the limitations and exclusions of that coverage? And does critical illness insurance make sense for you to protect you from the long-term financial impact of suffering a heart attack, stroke, or the onset of cancer?

These are just a few of the many insurance-related questions you should consider in making sure you have an appropriate insurance portfolio that's right for you. With the activities of RRSP season, and with recent developments on global stock markets commanding so much attention these days, it's easy to overlook many of the basics of your financial strategy. Insurance is one of those core elements that should not be neglected. Make sure you have a detailed discussion with your financial advisor about your insurance needs and the different options that are available to you.

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BE SYSTEMATIC WHEN SELECTING STOCKS - Raj Thavaratnasingham

It's easy to get emotional about stocks - especially with the roller coaster rides global markets have taken so far this year. That's why it's a good idea to stay disciplined in your approach to stock selection. It sounds simple, but the fact is that ignoring short-term gyrations and holding an array of quality stocks for the long term is a time-tested, successful strategy for countless serious investors.

Of course, it's important to make sure that stocks do not represent your entire investment portfolio. You need to have an appropriate allocation of assets, with stocks complemented by other asset classes such as bonds. With that in mind, some of the most attractive stocks for your portfolio are those that provide dividend income (though keep in mind dividends may be increased, decreased, or eliminated at any time without notice), while providing the potential for long-term growth. Individual investors who want to own stocks might be best served by owning a basket of at least 20 to 25 of these stocks, selected from a variety of industries and geographies, including Canada, the U.S. and Western Europe. An alternative is to own mutual funds that follow a similar approach. This is to ensure adequate diversification, which does not guarantee a profit or protect against loss, but has proven over time to be very prudent. In identifying quality companies, here are four key characteristics to look for:

1. Operation in Attractive Industries - You might find that certain industries are particularly appealing because they have high barriers to entry, low capital intensity and beneficial types of regulation. At the same time, it might be best to avoid highly cyclical industries that are overly dependent on a strong economy to produce good growth opportunities.

2. Strong Competitive Position - If a company doesn't command a leadership position within its industry, it should offer other competitive strengths that could help it sustain long-term profitability. Typically, companies with a strong "franchise" or a special niche tend to generate higher returns on capital.

3. Experienced Management Teams - Companies led by strong management teams that have a track record of success are most likely to be deploying the firm's capital in ways that will consistently generate attractive returns for shareholders.

4. Solid Financial Positions - Keep your eye on companies that have historically demonstrated consistent growth in sales and earnings, while maintaining a solid balance sheet and strong cash flow. While these stocks typically will decrease in value during inevitable market declines, they may be in the best position to bounce back when markets recover.

After you've determined that a company is of high quality, you still need to buy it at the right price. To assess whether or not it's attractively valued, you might want to start by looking at traditional valuation approaches such as comparing a stock's price-to-earnings ratio (P/E) to its historical P/E range and to that of its peers. Then there are a number of other, more sophisticated measures and tools that can be employed. Check with your financial advisor to learn more about these techniques. You should also be prepared to periodically add or remove stocks to maintain proper industry weightings, adjust foreign content, reflect rating changes or take advantage of new opportunities. But avoid being too reactionary, by making changes based on short-term setbacks or expectations. Remember that a long-term focus and systematic process may be your most valuable guiding principles.

Past performance is not a guarantee of future results, but it's safe to say that investing in quality companies at attractive prices has historically been a successful way for individual investors to own stocks over time. Speak with your financial advisor to learn more about which specific stocks might be appropriate for you.

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DIGITIZATION OF MANUFACTURING

Arun Theivendirarajah, B.A.S Computer Engineering (Waterloo)
Senior Software Developer at Richrelevance Inc., Seattle,Washington, U.S.A



The industrial revolution began in Great Britain at the end of the 18th century in the textile industry. Prior to that textiles were made by thousands of workers in their cottages spinning and weaving fabric by hand. All of that ended when the cotton mill was built and the modern day factory was born. Fabric was made in large quantities and with greater efficiencies than ever before.

The second major revolution arrived in the early 1900s in the auto industry. The invention of the assembly line by Henry Ford pioneered mass production of automobiles. The first car to come out of the assembly line was the infamous Model T. It cost a mere $850 in 1909 ($22,000 in today's money), and by the time the factory was in full flight in 1915 it only cost $440. It disrupted the entire auto industry since competitors were selling cars made by hand that cost five to eight times as much. Current day, the assembly line has penetrated all industries - from cars to Barbie dolls to Tylenol pills - almost all the products that you use every day are built in an assembly line. In the last thirty years economic globalization has grown exponentially. Economic globalization is the global distribution of the production of goods and services enabled by the reduction of barriers to international trade and the reduction of restrictions on the movement of capital (money). Firms in developed countries can find cheaper labor in developing countries, which in turn reduces their cost of goods. This has allowed the Ford assembly line to no longer be in the US, but also in China, Brazil, Mexico, Romania and India. It's no coincidence that most of the goods you use daily have the "Made in China" sticker on them.

Now, we are in the cusp of a third revolution - digitization of manufacturing. There are a number of technologies driving this revolution - smarter software, advanced robotics, building processes like 3D printing and advanced materials. The new factories of the world will no longer be making millions of screwdrivers that look exactly the same in giant buildings; instead they will be customized for each of us and built on demand with a click of a button near you.

Smarter software paired with advanced robotic machines is allowing companies to design and build products rapidly and customized for specific customer needs. The BMW factory in Regensburg, Germany employs robots made by Kuka to build the main chassis, front and rear axles. So flexible are these robots that they can make the 1 or 3 series cars in the same station. The tools and fixtures used by the robots automatically adjust to clamp or manipulate car parts of different dimensions. These robots work 24 hours a day, make much fewer mistakes, and are completely safe. In 1999, Nissan factories produced 271,000 cars with 4594 factory works. In 2011 they built 480,000 cars with 5400 people. It's not just the auto industry that is relying on smarter robots for manufacturing. A total of 5,096 robots were ordered from North American robotics companies in the first quarter of 2012, which is an increase of 27% compared to the same period in 2011.

DIGITIZATION OF MANUFACTURING CONTD....

Machines that have far greater speed, accuracy and endurance are replacing the assembly line full of humans employing manual labor.

3D printing or additive printing is another phenomenon that is proliferating in the manufacturing industry. In 3D printing an object is created by adding thousands of layers of material on top of each other. It allows you to rapidly prototype new designs - shoes, cars, watches, jewelry, and jet engines before mass production. In other cases it is used to create products that are used in mass such as hearing aids, auto parts, and iPhone cases. How does 3D printing work? Artists, Designers and Engineers design objects using computer aided design (CAD) programs, and then simply press the "print" button on their computer to create a 3-dimensional version of what they seen on screen. There are different types of technologies used to build the object. One approach named fused deposition modeling (FDM) sprays fine amounts of a hot thermoplastic via a nozzle on to each layer, pausing in between layers for the plastic to cool down and harden. Selective laser sintering (SLS) is another process that builds objects by laying down a fine layer of powder and then using a laser to selectively fuse some of its granules together. SLS printers can create objects using a wide range of powdered materials - wax, polystyrene, nylon, glass, ceramics, stainless steel, titanium, aluminum and alloys. Electron beam melting (EBM) is another type of additive manufacturing technology for metal parts. In this process melted metal powder is layered on with an electron beam in a high vacuum. The future for 3D printing is immense. An area known as "bioprinting" is leveraging 3D printers to create replacement organs, blood vessels and tissues for the human body. As prices go down, 3D printers will be as prevalent as inkjet printers at home, unleashing the inner designer in all of us.

Another industry that's being affected by digitization of manufacturing is the drug industry. Traditionally ingredients were brought from around the world, processed and refined in one country, and then turned into a pill or cream in a different factory or country. It required moving large amounts of material across continents, resulting in a lot of expense and wasted time. A new continuous manufacturing process pioneered in Boston (a collaboration between MIT and Novartis) is flipping this on its head. This 'plant' can fit in a shipping container and can make 10 million pills a year. The processing time to create a batch of pills has been reduced from 300 to 40 hours. This allows drug manufacturers to respond to a pandemic by transporting the plant and materials to the local region where it's needed immediately. It has the added benefit of the ability to be re-programmed with few keystrokes to make customized doses for particular patients.

Consumers will embrace the age of the third industrial revolution for all its positives - customization, quality and speed of delivery. It remains to be seen if the governments will do the same. Their instincts are to protect large old-fashioned industries, and not the new entrepreneurs that will disrupt them. Governments should instead focus on enabling & funding innovation, creating a skilled work force through better education and immigration reform. Let the revolution begin!

Dr. Shan A. Shanmugavadivel

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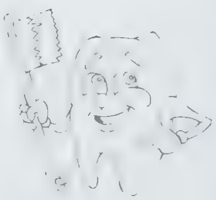
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PERSONAL GUARANTEES AND INDEMNITIES FOR SMALL BUSINESS CORPORATIONS



This article is solely for informative purposes and is not to be taken as legal advice. For legal advice specific to your business, please consult a licensed corporate commercial lawyer.

Written by: **Dinesh Ramanathan,** L.L.B. (Osgoode Hall Law School), Honours B.A. (University of Toronto, St. George). *Dinesh is a corporate commercial lawyer at the Law Office of Gary Anandasangaree Professional Corporation.*

Introduction:

In the Canadian economy, the vast majority of small businesses are set up as corporations. One of the primary benefits is that a corporation is a separate legal entity from the shareholders. This means that the debts and obligations of the corporation apply against the corporation itself, and not against the shareholders. For example, let us assume that a business person by the name of Siva sets up a corporation called Acme Inc. If Acme Inc. enters a Lease without a personal guarantee with a Landlord and fails to pay rent for several months, the Landlord cannot sue Siva for the unpaid debts. The Landlord's only recourse is to sue Acme Inc. If Acme Inc. is a large public corporation with assets, the Landlord can enforce the court judgement against the corporation's assets. But if Acme Inc. is a new small corporation and the Landlord succeeds a court judgement in its favour, the judgement would be of little value if the corporation has no asset value.

As you can see, this situation creates potential risks for anyone that does business with new small corporations, especially where the service or product is delivered before payment is received. In order to deal with this potential risk, financial lenders, landlords, franchisors, and several other companies require that small businesses provide a personal guarantee or indemnity to maximize the assurance that the terms of their business agreement are upheld.

What is a Guarantee and Indemnity?

Personal guarantees and indemnities are agreements that often go alongside, or are contained within, a primary agreement between a corporation and another party. In the context of small business, the effect of a personal guarantee and indemnity is to make the debts and/or obligations of the corporation enforceable against an individual in their personal capacity (usually the business owner). Using the example of Siva, Acme Inc. and the Landlord, a personal guarantee and indemnity would be an agreement between Landlord and Siva that would make Siva personally liable for all of the obligations of Acme Inc. under the Lease. If Acme Inc. fails to make its rent payments, then the Landlord would be able to bring a lawsuit against Siva in his personal capacity to recover the rent payable.

For the purposes of this article we will be treating personal guarantees and indemnities as the same type of agreement, because the consequences discussed below are similar for both forms of agreements. Although personal guarantees and indemnities have unique legal meanings, an examination of these differences is outside the scope of this brief article.
You can also provide a guarantee for an entity which is not a corporation.

PERSONAL GUARANTEES CONTD....

What are the Consequences of a Personal Guarantee and Indemnity?

The consequence of a personal guarantee and indemnity agreement is that the respective landlord lender/creditor can pursue the personal assets of the Guarantor/Indemnifier for unpaid debts. For example, let's assume that Siva owned a house, a car, and had a stable source of income from employment. If Acme Inc. fails to make several rent payments, then the Landlord will likely succeed in getting a judgement from the court in its favour. Then the Landlord can enforce the judgement by putting a lien on the home and car belonging to Siva, or garnish his wages from employment.

Figure 1: Without Personal Guarantee or Indemnity

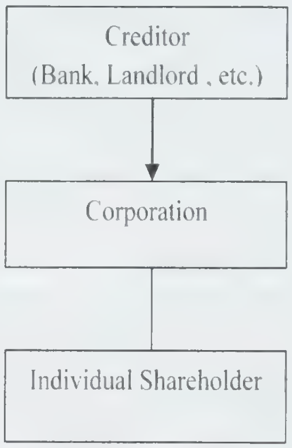
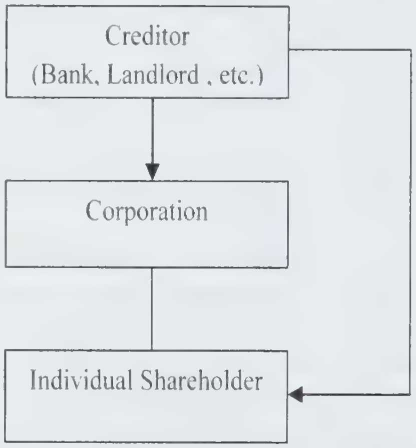


Figure 2: With Personal Guarantee or Indemnity



Are all Guarantees and Indemnities the Same?

Each personal guarantee and indemnity obligation is based on distinct terms in a contract, which means that there can be unique obligations imposed on the individual guarantor. Sometimes, small business loans from major financial institutions have a cap on the extent to which personal guarantees can be enforced. In some cases, the lender may only be able to reclaim 25% of the full loan amount from the individual guarantor or indemnifier. The particular obligations under the guarantee and indemnity can be extended or narrowed by changing the terms of the respective guarantee and indemnity agreement. While there is little room to negotiate with guarantees and indemnities provided by large organizations and financial institutions, there is sometimes room to negotiate the terms with smaller enterprises such as private lenders and landlords.

PERSONAL GUARANTEES CONTD....

How Long do the Obligations Last, and What Happens if the Corporation is Sold?

Many personal guarantees and indemnity agreements are perpetual and continue with the life of the primary business agreement, meaning that they potentially survive as long as the primary contract is active. As such, it is advisable to have specific timelines or conditions for the expiration of the personal guarantee obligations set out in the agreement. Also, many personal guarantees and indemnity agreements provide that the obligations will continue even if the business is sold or transferred to a third party. For example, let us assume that Siva sells the assets of Acme Inc. to a third party, ABC Inc., and transfers the Lease to ABC Inc. Based on the terms of the personal guarantee agreement, Siva's obligations under the personal guarantee will likely continue after the Lease is transferred, and Siva will likely be liable for any rent payments that ABC Inc. has failed to make. While it is questionable as to whether personal guarantees and indemnities can be enforced perpetually, it is best to define the conditions for expiration or termination before signing the agreement.

What Should I do Before I Sign a Guarantee?

As is the case with any substantive business document, consult with a corporate commercial lawyer before signing the personal guarantee or indemnity agreement. Having an experienced corporate commercial lawyer negotiating on your behalf can ensure that you have made best efforts to have equitable terms in your personal Indemnity and Guarantee Agreement. Even if your lawyer is unable to amend the terms of the Guarantee or Indemnity, he or she can clearly explain the legal consequences of the agreement to you and allow you to make a more informed business decision.

Conclusions

Thus, we have understood the legal aspects of the personal guarantee & indemnity and the consequences when applied with respect to a corporation. Again I recommend that, if anyone wants to sign personal Indemnity & Guarantee Agreements, please consult an experienced corporate commercial lawyer, understand the consequences of each option and get the documents prepared by him/her. ✸

" Every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving."

Albert Einstein

" I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

Mahatma Gandhi

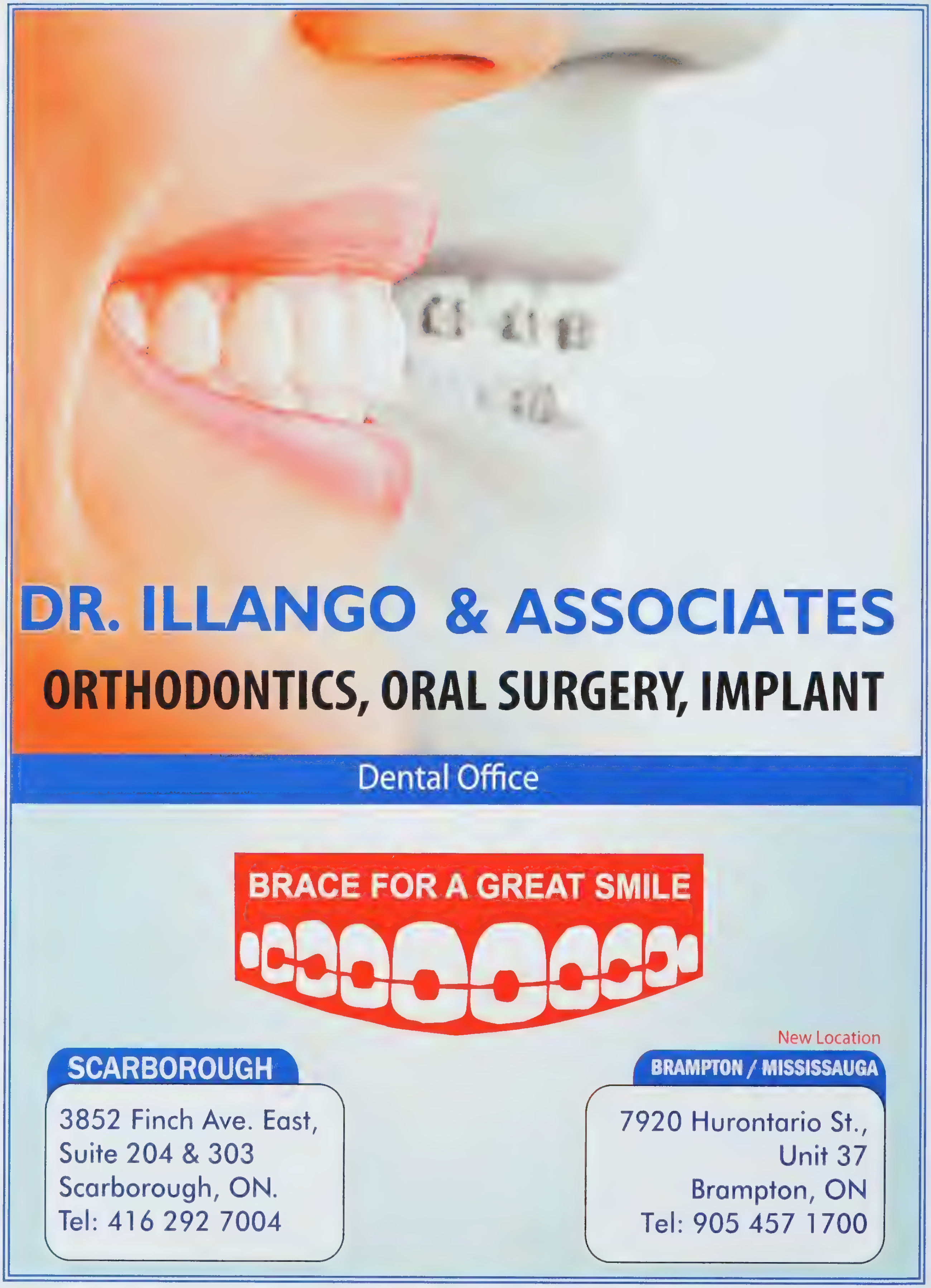
PRESIDENT'S DINNER
ASGC'S FUNDRAISING EVENT

Traditionally ASGC's annual fundraising event was a Sunday afternoon movie. This year the executive committee decided to change the format of the event in order to keep in line with the modern times. President Yaso Somalingam took the leadership in hosting an evening of dinner and dance for friends, family and members of ASGC and other organizations. This event was held at Yaso's residence on March 10, 2012. The attendees were treated with excellent food and entertainment. The donations were accepted. At this stage it is worth mentioning Kanastana Yasotharan's exemplary contribution to this event by donating all her collections at her birthday celebrations. We were very pleased to raise a total of about four thousand dollars at this event. ASGC appreciates the generous contribution of all the donors who are friends and families of the President and ASGC members. Last but not least, we would like to thank the excellent hospitality of our host, Yaso and his family.









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முன்னேற்றத்தின் முட்டுக்கட்டை

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கனடாவிற்கு நான் 84ம் ஆண்டு சுற்றுலா பயணியாக வந்திருக்கிறேன். அப்போது எம்மவர்கள் கனடாவிற்கு அகதியாக வரத் தொடங்கிய காலம். ஈழத்தமிழர்கள் மொன்றியல் நகரிலும் ரொறன்ரோ நகரிலும் மட்டும் வசித்திருந்தார்கள். ஒரு அறையிலே நான்கு ஐந்து பேர் என கூடி வாழ்தார்கள். அனேகமானோர் அரசாங்க உதவித் தொகையிலேயே வாழ்ந்தார்கள். அதிலும் மிச்சப்படுத்தி வீட்டுக்கும் அனுப்பினார்கள். சிலர் ஆங்காங்கே சிறு வேலைகள் பார்த்தார்கள். கூட்டித் துடைப்பவர்களாகவும், பாத்திரம் கழுவுபவர்களாகவும் வெகு சிலர் மரத் தளபாட தொழிற்சாலைகளிலும் வேலை பார்த்தார்கள். காலம் உருண்டோடியது. தமிழர்கள் அகதிகளாக கனடாவில் கால் பதித்து 30 வருடங்களாகின்றது. தமிழர்களின் கால் ஊன்றலையும், பல்துறை வளர்ச்சியையும், தொழில் முயற்சிகளையும் உற்று நோக்குகிறேன். குறுகிய காலத்தில் தமிழர்கள் கனடாவில் உறுதியாக தம் கால்களை பதித்துக் கொண்டாலும் ஏதோ ஒரு குறை எமது அதீத வளர்ச்சிக்கு தடையாக இருப்பதாகவே உணர்கிறேன்.

கனடா சிறு வியாபாரங்களினால் கட்டியெழுப்பப்பட்டிருக்கும் நாடு. பல இன மக்களும் ஒன்றிணைந்து ஓரினமாக வாழும் நாடு. ஒவ்வொரு இனமும் தன்னினத்தோடு மட்டுமல்லாது பல்லினம் சேர்ந்த பிரதான வர்க்கத்தினரோடு கலந்துறவாட வேண்டியது நிர்ப்பந்தமாகிறது. ஆனால் எங்களைச் சுற்றி கவனித்தால் 99 வீதமான தொழில் முயற்சிகளும் தமிழர்களிடையே நடாத்தப்படுவதாகவே இருக்கின்றது. 6 வானொலிகள், 10 பத்திரிகைகள், இரண்டு தொலைக்காடசிகள் 50 இற்கு மேற்பட்ட உணவு வாங்கும் இடங்கள், 35 கோயில்கள். இப்படி சொல்லிக் கொண்டே போகலாம். நாங்கள் வெறுமனே தமிழ் வியாபார கையேட்டின் பருமனை வைத்து எங்கள் சமூகத்தின் வளர்ச்சியை பெருமையாக பேசிக் கொள்ளகிறோமா? அவை எம்மவர்கள் எம்மவர்களுக்குள் நடத்தும் வியாபாரத்தின் தொகுப்பு. கனடிய வியாபார சந்தை பெரிய சமுத்திரம் போன்றது. தமிழர்கள் தமிழர்களோடு மட்டும் நடத்தும் வியாபாரம் (உதாரணம் இடியப்ப வியாபாரம்) சிறிய கட்டுமரம் ஏறி கரையோரங்களில் வலை வீசி மீன் பிடிப்பதை போன்றது. தமிழர்கள் மட்டுமல்லாது பல்லின மக்களும் நுகரும் தொழிலைப் பார்ப்பது (உதாரணம் குசினித் தளபாடங்கள் - லக்வா) இயந்திர வள்ளத்தில் நடுக்கடலுக்கு சென்று வலை வீசுவது போன்றது. பிரதான வர்க்கத்தினருடன் மட்டும் தொழில் புரிவது (உதாரணம் கேபிள் சொப்) ஆழ்கடலுக்கு Trawler இல் சென்று மீன் பிடிப்பதை போன்றது. அப்படி பிரதான வர்க்கத்தினரோடு மட்டும் வியாபாரம் செய்பவர்கள் தமிழர்களிடையே இல்லாமல் இல்லை. வெகு குறைவான எண்ணிக்கை தான் என்றாலும் அந்த விபரங்கள் எவருக்குமே தெரிய வாஃப்பில்லாமல் இருக்கிறது. தொழில் முயற்சி மட்டுமல்ல பல தமிழர்கள் பிரதான வர்க்கத்தினரின் multi million கம்பனிகளில் முக்கியமான முடிவுகள் எடுக்கக்கூடிய பதவிகளை வகிக்கிறார்கள். ஆனாலும் அவர்கள் யார் யாரென்பது தற்செயலாக ஒரு தமிழரை சந்திக்கும்போதுதான் அறிய முடிகிறது.

எம் தமிழர்களின் வியாபார முயற்சிகள், பிரதான வர்க்கத்தினரின் நிறுவனங்களில் நிறைவேற்று அதிகாரிகளாகவோ அல்லது முகாமையாளர்களாகவோ பணியாற்றுபவர்கள் போன்ற தரவுகளை பதிவு செய்யும் முயற்சி ஒன்று மனோ தில்லைநாதன் தலைவராக இருக்கும்போது வர்த்தக சம்மேளத்தினரால் எடுக்கப்பட்டு முதலாவது பகுதியும் முடிவடைந்தது. அதன் பின்னர் அந்த முயற்சியே மறக்கப்பட்டு விட்டது. வியாபாரமென்பதே தொடர்புகளும் தகவல்களும் தான். யூத மக்கள் எல்லோருமே பணக்காரர்கள் என்றும் எந்த ஒரு நாட்டின் சொத்தில் பாதி அவர்களிடமே இருக்கிறதென்றும் நாம் திண்ணைப் பேச்சு பேசிக் கொள்கிறோம். எப்படி அவர்களால் அந்த நிலைக்கு வரமுடிந்தது என சிந்தித்து பார்த்திருக்கின்றோமா?

முன்னேற்றத்தின் முட்டுக்கட்டை தொடர்ச்சி....

ஒவ்வொரு இடத்திலும் அவர்களுக்கு ஒரு மையம் இருக்கும். தொழிலதிபர்களும், தொழில் முயற்சி செய்பவர்களும், பெரிய தொழில் நிறுவனங்களில் தொழில் பார்க்கும் பெரிய உத்தியோகத்தர்களும் ஒவ்வொரு காலையும் 15 நிமிடங்கள் வரை அங்கு கூடி தேனீர் அருந்தும் வேளையில் தமது முயற்சிகள் பற்றி கருத்துக்களை பரிமாறிக் கொள்வார்கள். அதனால் தம்மைச்சுற்றி என்ன நடக்கிறது என்பதை மட்டும் தெரிந்து கொள்ளாமல் அதை தமக்கு சாதகமாக்கி முன்னேறவும் முடிகிறது. முன்னேற்றத்திற்கான முக்கிய காரணி கூடிப்பேசுவதும் தகவல் பரிமாறலுமே. அதற்கான தளம் ஒன்று தமிழருக்கு இருக்க வேண்டும்.

இது மட்டுமல்ல, இன்னுமொரு முக்கியமான தேவைக்கு கூடிப்பேசுதலும் தகவல் பரிமாறலும் தேவைப்படுகிறது. பல்கலைக்கழகம் சென்று பட்டம் பெற்று நல்ல தொழில் பார்க்கும் பண்பான பலர் திருமண வயதைத் தாண்டி துணை கிடைக்காமல் இருக்கிறார்கள். இன்றைய இளவயதினருக்கு பேச்சுத் திருமணத்தில் இஷ்டமில்லை. பாடசாலை நாட்களில் மிகுந்த கட்டுப்பாட்டோடு வளர்க்கப்பட்டவர்கள் படித்து முடிந்து வேலை பார்க்கத் தொடங்கியபின் அவர்கள் தமக்கு ஏற்றவர்களை சந்திக்கும் சந்தர்ப்பம் இல்லாமல் போய்விடுகிறது. இப்படித்தான் சிங்கப்பூர் அதிபர் லீக்குவான யூ வின் மகளுக்கு 30 வயதுக்கு மேலாகியும் திருமணம் நடக்காததால் தந்தை தனது அமைச்சர்களை அழைத்து அதற்கு ஏதாவது செய்யச் சொன்னார். அவர்கள் கல்யாண வயதை எட்டிய இளைஞர்களினதும் யுவதிகளினதும் தரவுகளை எடுத்து அவர்களது குணாதிசியங்களுக்கேற்ப தரம்பிரித்து ஒவ்வொரு குழுவுக்கும் ஒவ்வொரு வேலைத்திட்டத்தை கொடுத்து ஒரு முகாமிலே சேர்ந்திருக்க விட்டார்கள். அந்த வேலைத்திட்டம் முடிவடைந்தபோது லீக்குவாயூ வின் மகள் உட்பட முக்காவாசிப்பேர் தமக்கான துணையை தேர்ந்தெடுத்திருந்தார்கள். இவற்றையெல்லாம் பூர்த்தி செய்யக்கூடிய மையமாக சொர்க்கம் உருவானது. ஆனாலும் அப்படிப்பட்ட பலரும் கூடி சந்திக்கும் ஒரு மையத்தின் தேவையை எமது சமூகம் உணர்ந்ததாக தெரியவில்லை. தமிழர்கள் சமூகம் சார்ந்த பார்வையற்றவர்களாக தம்மைச் சுற்றி மட்டும் கவனிக்கும் சுயநலவாதிகளாக இருக்கிறார்கள் எனகுற்றம் சாட்டப் படுவது உண்மை தானா என எண்ணத் தோன்றுகின்றது.

சுற்றிப் பாருங்கள் எம்மவர் நிலையை. எமக்கென இசையில்லை, எமக்கென சினமா இல்லை, எமக்கென உடுப்புக்கள் எம்மவரால் தயாரிக்கப் படவில்லை. எமக்கு கேளிக்கை நிகழ்ச்சிகளை வழங்க எம் கலைஞர்களை ஏற்க நாம் தயாரில்லை, எமது தொலைக்காட்சிகளை பார்க்க நாம் தயாரில்லை. எமது எல்லாத் தேவைகளுக்கும் இந்தியாவிடம் தானே கையேந்தி நிற்கிறோம். அவர்கள் என்ன அத்தனை திறமைகளோடும் வானத்திலிருந்து குதித்தவர்களா? இல்லையே, மெல்ல மெல்ல வளர்ந்தவர்கள் தானே. நாம் என்ன வளர முடியாதா? ஈழத்தமிழர்கள் நிரம்ப வாழும் ரொறன்ரோவில் ஏகப்பட்ட உணவு விற்பனை நிலையங்கள் இருந்த போதும் அமர்ந்து உணவுண்ணவென ஒரு றெஸ்ரோறன்ற் இல்லையே. எம்மவர்கள் கூட்டமாக சென்று உணவுண்பது தென்னிந்திய உணவு சாலைகளில்தானே. ரொறன்ரோவின் பல முக்கிய உணவுசாலைகளின் பிரதான சமையற்காரர்கள் ஈழத்தமிழர்களாக இருந்தபோதும் எம்மவரால் ஓர் உணவுசாலையை நடத்தமுடியவில்லையென்றால் காரணமென்ன? சொல்வார்கள் நாய் நாயைக் கண்டால் குரைக்குமாம். வியாபார முன்னெடுப்புகளில் மட்டுமல்ல எந்தத் துறையை எடுத்துக் கொண்டாலும் தமிழர்கள் சமூகமாக பெரிதும் முன்னேறாததற்கு காரணம் சமூக நோக்கும் மற்றவர்களை அரவணைக்கும் தன்மையும் இல்லாதது மட்டுமல்ல கூடிப்பேசுதலும் தகவல் பரிமாறலும் இல்லாததும்தான். ஈழத்தில் தமிழர்கள் இன்று எல்லாவற்றையும் இழந்து நிர்க்கதியாய் இருப்பதற்கும் காரணம் இதுதான். இத்தனை இழப்புகளை சந்தித்த பின்பும் சமூக நோக்கு அற்று நாம் இருப்போமேயானால் ஈழத்தமிழர்கள் வாழ்வில் முன்னேறத்தான் முடியுமா? ★

REFLECTIONS ON SUCCESS IN AN MBA PROGRAM

Harindra Sebastian, FSA, FCIA, MBA
Consulting Actuary, Towers Watson



Pursuing a Masters of Business Administration (an MBA) degree is an admirable and exciting goal. Many dream of what they will learn and accomplish upon completing an MBA program, but only some people achieve their objectives. Having recently completed an executive MBA program, and having spoken to many people who have also completed MBA programs, I have put together five points of advice on what prospective and current MBA students can do to get the most of an MBA experience and find individual success.

1. Know what you want

When pursuing an MBA program, it is important to know what it is you want to achieve before you even begin. Many of my classmates were keen on changing jobs and moving into more senior roles with other companies. Others wanted to stay within their current companies, with goals of advancement and improved performance. Regardless of your motivations, knowing what they are will help you decide whether an MBA is the right option for you, when you should pursue it, and which program is right for you.

Knowing your goals will also help you stay focused throughout your studies, and will shape your educational experience. I recommend that you write down your goals and couple these with the reasons behind them. Also establish concrete ways to continually remind yourself of these goals as you pursue the selection of and admission into an MBA program, as well as during your course of study.

2. Get into the right program for you

In understanding your goals and motivations, you may find that you naturally gravitate towards certain MBA programs. In my experience, prospective MBA students select a specific program based on their growth objectives, format of the program, university and program reputation, location and cost. Ensuring the program you choose is right for you will ultimately make the program easy to manage and rewarding.

A few items to consider:

- Employers naturally prefer candidates of more reputable MBA programs. Some employers will only advertise job postings to certain MBA programs, based on their reputation within a specific industry or market. Strong programs also have a deep alumni network which may help in finding new jobs. Additionally, a well-regarded program will attract a class and network of well-connected and ambitious professionals.

- It is valuable to distinguish between full-time and part-time MBA programs, as well as executive and international MBA programs. While part-time MBA programs offer the opportunity to pursue studies whilst continuing to work, full-time MBA programs are shorter (as short as nine months) and also allow students to be more focused on their studies.

REFLECTIONS ON SUCCESS IN AN MBA PROGRAM CONTD....

- You may wish to focus on specific areas of study. For example, students may choose to concentrate on courses in finance, marketing or mergers and acquisitions. Given the limited time and access to the wide selection of classes most programs offer, it is recommended that you choose classes carefully, always with a view to your individual and particular goals.

- Cost is always an important consideration with any venture, especially if the student is required to leave his or her present employment to pursue the degree, and keeping in mind given that obtaining a job at the end of the program may take longer than expected.

- While it is common for students to relocate for a full-time MBA program, those pursuing part-time MBA programs usually take these programs locally.

3. Effective preparation for class work

In looking back at the MBA program, and in speaking with other classmates, a common theme that we have discussed is that we would have liked to spend more time in preparation forclass work. In order to gain the most from in-class discussions, students must read and understand the materials in advance. In particular, professors often utilize business cases to help illustrate their points and facilitate thinking around particular subject areas. In reviewing business cases it is useful to understand key themes, strengths and weaknesses of the current situation, areas for improvements, and alternative business strategies for the future. I recommend that you allocate sufficient time to prepare for classes and ensure that you think critically about the reading materials in light of anticipated class discussions.

4. Learn from the experiences and insights of your classmates

In my experience, some of the best insights in class were not read in books or delivered by professors, but instead were articulated by students. With a diverse set of backgrounds, students are able to bring their own experiences to the classroom, and are able to draw on different ways of thinking and solving problems. Often, business classes include group work, whereby students are partnered with others who have very different backgrounds, and are therefore able to provide multiple, and very different points of view to solve a given problems and to creatively build strategies for future business growth. Even after the end of the program, I continue to lean on my classmates for ideas to address business issues I encounter in my current work. I suggest that you consider all points of view that your classmates offer, as it will enrich your learning experience and broaden your skills and knowledge.

5. Build strong relationships with classmates and school network

One of the most important aspects of the MBA program will be the relationships you build with your classmates. My class was composed of a group of highly successful individuals from a wide range of fields spanning technology, operations, fashion, mining, insurance and marketing, to name a few. I expect that the relationships developed with my classmates will be lifetime relationships, built on strong foundations of collegiality and having been through a unique experience together. These relationships will lead to personal friendships as well as strong business partnerships in the future.

REFLECTIONS ON SUCCESS IN AN MBA PROGRAM CONTD....

The completion of an MBA is a major achievement and can lead to a stronger career in the long-term. In preparing for this undertaking, identify individual goals and understand your unique situation and ensure that the program selected fits these. In particular, selecting an MBA program with a strong reputation will be important in building long-term career success, as it can lead to increased opportunities from potential employers. Effective advanced preparation for classes and learning from the unique views and experiences that your classmates bring to discussions will help to enhance your educational experience and allow for broader view of business strategy. In looking to the future, it is important to recognize the relationships continue to develop with my classmates, built on strong foundations of collegiality and having been through a unique experience together. These relationships will lead to life-time friendships as well as strong business partnerships in the future.

JOB CONNECT









DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT TRENDS IN ONTARIO

By: Soundari Vigneshwaran, CMA
Business Analyst, Financial Analysis and Accountability Branch Ontario Ministry of Education



The teaching profession has long been seen as one of the oldest, humblest and highly respected careers. However, one may need to consider the future for teachers in Ontario.

This article examines the challenges that school boards in Ontario face as they continue to service a changing population. It also analyzes the changes required in the teaching and learning environments.

The Ontario school system is currently comprised of 4,020 elementary and 911 secondary schools. Schools in the province of Ontario are administered by district school boards and are divided into English Public, English Catholic, French Public and French Catholic boards for a total of 72 district school boards in the Province.

The size and location of many of the schools are as a result of settlement patterns from 50 years ago. A study performed by The Ammendolia Group Ltd., an Educational Consulting firm that specializes in demographic analysis and enrolment forecasting for Ontario school boards shows that the population of school aged children had significantly increased post world war 2, and this led to many of these schools being built, as well as the rapid expansion of school boards across the Province. Historically, most of these settlements were in dense developments close to major cities.

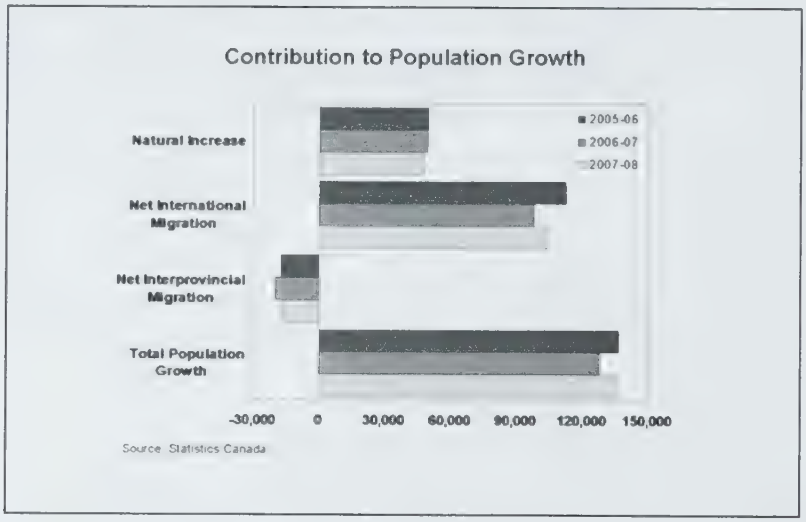
However, in the last 20 years or so, most growth has occurred in the suburbs and city centres have been in decline. According to Statistics Canada's most recent figures, Canada's elementary and secondary school enrolments fell by 1.2% starting between 1997-1998 and 2003-2004 school years and further declines are anticipated over the next few years as the school-aged population shrinks.

Most provinces in Canada have experienced a steady reduction in kindergarten to grade 12 enrolments over the last few years. Ontario saw enrolment growth through the late 1990s and up until the 2002-2003 school year. Enrolment dropped sharply when Ontario's grade 13 was eliminated and has been on the decline ever since. According to reports from the Ministry of Education, enrolment in Ontario public schools has decreased by over 68,000 students between 2002 and 2007. Both in Alberta and in Quebec, enrolment growth began to slow in the late 1990s but have followed by a more recent levelling off.

While Canada continues to experience overall population growth, the country has been experiencing long-term school enrolment declines. The number of school aged children dropped to 5.2 million in 2005-2006, down 3% from 1999. Based on the population projections in the 2006 census, produced by the Ministry of Finance although Ontario's population is projected to experience a healthy growth over the next 26 years, the population aged 15-64 will slow down until 2027-2028.

School enrolment number fluctuations are caused by two main sources: natural increases and decreases, and net migration - international, inter-provincial and intra-provincial. According to statistics, close to one-third of net population growth in Ontario came from natural increase (births minus deaths) and approximately 70% of future growth is expected to be from migration.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT TRENDS CONTD....



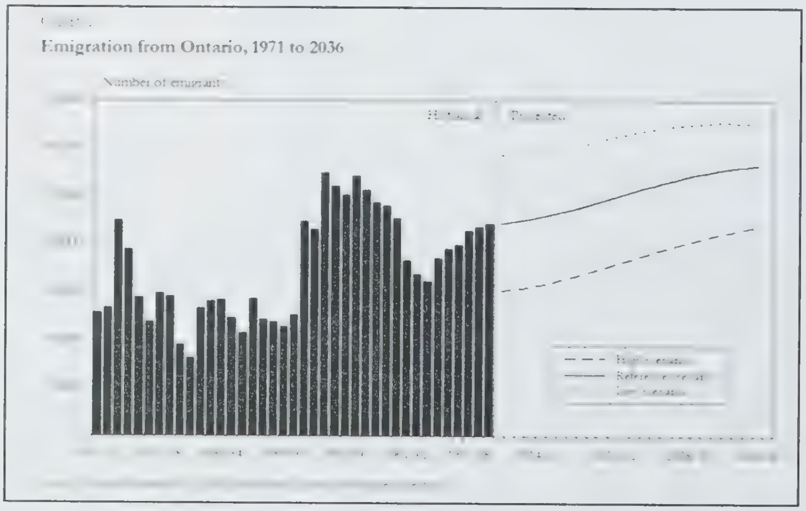
Natural Increase

★ the number of seniors (aged 65+) is expected to double to more than 4 million and make up over 23% of the total population in Canada. Ontario has one of the highest life expectancy in the world and this is expected to continue linearly over the next 25 years

★ the 0-14 aged population is expected to stabilize with some continued short term declines. As of 2010 the number of children in Canada aged 14 and under accounted for 16.5% of the population down from 16.6% the previous year and 29.3% in 1971
International Migration

★ this is the largest contributor to population growth in Ontario and it is projected that by 2030 all population growth in Canada will be attributed to immigration

★ the number of emigrants is projected to increase gradually between 2010-2011 and 2035-2036. The share of Canada's immigrants choosing to settle in Ontario has fallen from 59.6% in 2001-2002 to 46.1% in 2007-2008 and 42% in 2010




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DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT TRENDS CONTD....

Inter-Provincial Migration

★ Inter-Provincial migration fluctuates from year to year and is closely tied to economic cycles

★ Over the last 10 years, Ontario saw a net inter-provincial migration loss of close to 70,000. Most of the net losses in recent years were the result of booming economic conditions in the West especially in Alberta

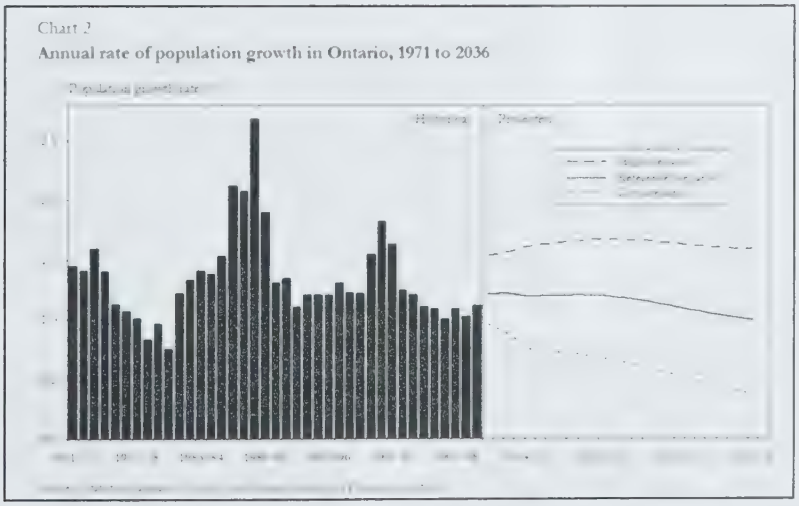
Intra-Provincial Migration

★ Around Ontario, the total population growth within the GTA has been stagnant at 1% whereas areas such as Ottawa and London increased by almost 3%. Both the elementary school aged population and pre-school aged population continue to decrease in Toronto, Ottawa and London

★ The City of Brampton has been the fastest growing municipality in the Province having a total population increase of 33% and the elementary school population increase of 32% since 2001. The pre-school aged population increased by more than 32% in the same period

It should be noted that in Ontario the elementary aged population in many parts of the Province is expected to continue declining over the next few years. The secondary aged population is expected to begin declining in the short to mid-term as the smaller elementary aged population rolls in.

Immigrants coming into the country are starting to settle in more non-traditional areas such as: Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Foundland. This is caused primarily due to the low cost of living in those parts of the country and the easy availability of job opportunities. Consequently, most school boards in Ontario have experienced tremendous enrolment declines and it is projected that many will continue to do so resulting in school closures, teacher layoffs, hiring and salary freezes and service reductions.


Chart 2
Annual rate of population growth in Ontario, 1971 to 2036

The major challenges caused by declining enrolment in Ontario School Boards are funding limitations which lead to staffing issues.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT TRENDS CONTD....

Less students in the school system means less money. When fewer students enrol, school boards receive less funding. However, many school operational expenditures remain fixed regardless of the size of the school population. This makes it difficult to adequately run schools. It is reported that the rate of school closures in Ontario has doubled in recent years, potentially resulting in both a surplus and a shortage of teachers.

Small schools with fewer students cannot afford to employ enough specialist teachers such as: special education teachers, librarians, and support staff to offer the same extent of courses offered by large schools, contributing to teacher shortages in these specialities, and a surplus of regular school teachers that may not have sufficient jobs as class sizes shrink. Overall, this would imply fewer needs for teachers in the future in the Ontario school system.

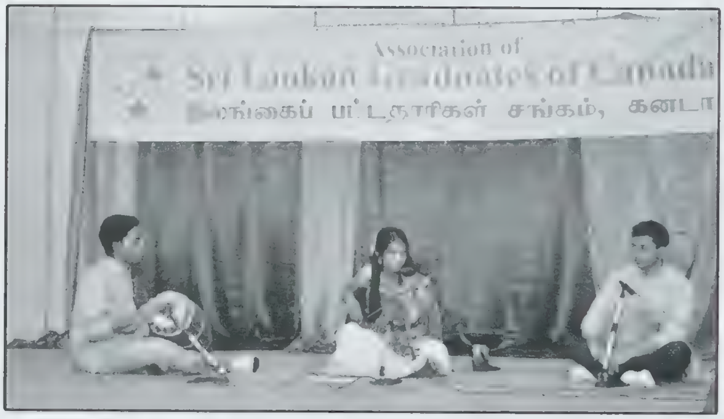
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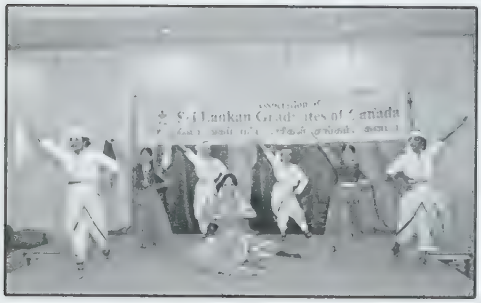
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ARE WE STILL PURSUING OUR TRADITIONS?
By:Kanastana Yasotharan



Abuse, embarrassment, loneliness and disrespect are some of the many words to describe the experiences of many seniors. In today's society, there is a dramatic increase in the number of the elderly facing abuse. Their freedoms and supposed rights are being stripped away leaving them with no voice. Throughout society there are many cultures that feel it is their privilege and honour for them to take care of their elders, thus having them live with them is to be seen as a blessing. In the traditional Chinese and South Asian society, it is not peculiar to see the elderly living with their children. In fact, grandparents are seen to be seen as the head of the family. As well, Mexicans live with many generations in one family, while Nigerians consider the words of the elderly to be greater than an amulet. In addition, the Japanese celebrate Respect-for-the aged Day in honour of all the seniors. Once married, children are expected to live separately from their parents in Western countries. As first and second generation immigrants of this country we are continuing to take on our new Canadian lifestyle; however we tend to lose the vital traditions and deep culture that help in gaining happiness and success. The elderly are generally obeyed, revered, and considered as fountains of knowledge and wisdom. It is through the elders that we are able to understand the past and appreciate the present. After their long lasting years of managing and providing for the household, the elderly look forward to relax in tranquility, enjoy solitude, and meditate in retirement. Too many, parents are second to God, and to some they are God. It is quite eccentric that we find that peace, tranquility and enjoyment can be seen by allowing our parents and grandparents to nursing homes in the foster care of complete strangers.

The active involvement of family member in their loved one's care may be the reason to why the quality of care at home is incomparable to any other long-term facilitation. Through home care seniors receive one-on-one attention as opposed to nursing facilities where one nurse is responsible for 10 residents. Dr. David Fisher, M.D., is a board certified geriatrician and palliative care physician who has spent a lot of time in nursing homes and thinks they serve an integral part of the health care system. However, he states "most of the patients I [have] admitted to the nursing home never planned on being there long term. Often, patients are admitted for one reason, i.e. to rehabilitate from a hip fracture, but they end up having to stay in the nursing home for other reasons."At home, families ensure that their parent or grandparent is taken care in a proper manner while monitoring their health, elevating their care needs, and responding to emergencies. The household caregivers for the patients are also chosen wisely by the family, thus there are fewer personalized caregivers in contrary to an entire nursing home staff. This selection of caregivers creates a more personal relationship between the elder and caregiver.

Dr. Anthony Ohotto, M.D., a geriatric and palliative care specialist, states "There is a therapeutic effect that happens when you visit someone in their personal space. They may get a better sense that you care about them, that you take their needs seriously, that you are willing to spend time. They show you photos, introduce you to the cat, perhaps open up a little more." Many nursing homes, including those known to be superior, are forced to meet the needs of far more residents than they have funding for. This leads to cases where the quality of care is minimized. The facility may lack in cleanliness, serve substandard food, have inaccuracy in medications, and abandon patients for long stretches of time. Home care ensures the family member is given the first and only priority to care. Judy Graham, Chicago Tribune Reporter, says "Nursing homes can provide excellent care -- or abysmal care. When it's the latter, it's horribly painful to witness."

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Dr. Fisher also states, that as a nursing home physician, he has "observed the slow and tragic decline these institutions inflict on their residents." The warm and loving environment where the senior is among family keeps the patient in an optimistic and uplifting mood which prompts health benefits.

Patients are ensured recovery with security, comfort, and privacy only through home care. It also prevents loss of independence through flexibility in time and personalized care designed specifically to the patient as opposed to the institutionalized time schedule that patients are forced to follow in nursing homes. Having made it to their golden age, seniors expect freedom; however nursing homes are too structured for any sort of liberty. For example, one can only eat when it is served or not eat at all and watching T.V only when it is allowed. Adults entering nursing homes also face loneliness as well.

They are disrupted from their regular environments and taken away from the people they are usually surrounded with. Familiarity with their own environment inclines mental health and greater sense of well-being. Dr. Ohotto states "This [home care] program allows for people to remain in a community living setting. Hopefully it is their own home, but if not, we help them to be in the least restrictive, most independent living setting feasible. Nursing homes are a last resort." Adapting to a new environment may be difficult to anyone; however it is more challenging for seniors. Although it is encouraged for seniors to meet other peers and make friends, however not all are successful. Other seniors may have depressing and pessimistic backgrounds altering the attitudes of the patient. In nursing facilities, seniors are prone to deal with many disturbing noises and problems such as talking, moaning, screaming, their invading of privacy, and face in seeing death of friends and acquaintances. Some seniors fear going to nursing as they believe it is the final stage before death. This usually turns out to be true as once there they usually do not return to their own home.

The prime aspect that is distinct between home care and long-term facilitators is the way they treat the senior. In the facilitation, the senior is merely a patient, whereas at home they are family. Parents have always been the ones that had brought up their children. As parents they were behind the child's success, raising them into disciplined beings, and gave them life. It is during their years as a senior that the son or daughter can give back to their parents and appreciate their hard work. Being present in the final stages of your parent's life helps family patch up any old tensions and, eventually, to achieve closure. Growing up with grandparents in the household many see looking after their parents as an obligation reinforced by culture and traditions. Young children are able to connect with their grandparents and value their wisdom and experiences. This sharing between family generations is difficult in the setting of nursing facilities. Most importantly the family does not feel guilt or heartache and there is no sense of abandonment.

Hastily placing elders in nursing homes does not solve any problems, it just creates them. "Family caregivers have a very difficult job. Take care of yourself. Your loved one depends on you. Take care of yourself too" voices Dr. Ohotto. Dr. Fisher also adds "Doctors trained in geriatrics often have knowledge about the various resources that may be available. It is good to bring this up with a physician." Families argue that they have no time to take care of their parents; however this can be counteracted by hiring an occupational nurse. If there is one thing we need to know about nursing homes is this: we do not want to live in one. Nursing homes are meant for those whose health has declined to a point that they can no longer care for themselves and there is no one available to care for their daily needs.

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To ensure that the senior is not feeling solitude, allow them to be involved in the neighbouring communities or invite their old friends and relatives home. Dr. Fisher suggests to "Look into volunteer organizations that visit seniors in the home and transport them to activities." If a parent simply refuses to go out, maybe we can bring family events into her home on a regular basis. This will help them become active and find self-worth and value, as opposed to feeling as a burden. This allows some contact with others in the same age and feel sense of belonging which can be great for an elderly person's mentality. Taking a meal or a walk with your parents or grandparents will help them feel a sense of inclusion in the family. Encourage them to take responsibilities in the household and the ability to share their talents and skills. For many, grandparents are the bridge to learning their culture, religion, and mother tongue. We wear traditional clothing, practice religious beliefs, and conserve our mother tongue; however we fail to take care of our elderly in this new Canadian lifestyle. The answer in preserving ones heritage lies in the elders, who have the wisdom, knowledge, and spirit to draw us back to our traditions and cultures. They are our role models, care providers, and educators. As children we owe everything to our parents, and we must repay this debt back in full. It is only through retirement that we can keep pride in their hearts and smiles on their faces. ✸

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நம்மவர் நிகழ்வுகளும், நேரத்தின் முக்கியத்துவமும்

கலாநிதி.எஸ்.சிவநாயகமூர்த்தி

OUR PROGRAMMES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY



இன்று புலம் பெயர்ந்த நாடாகிய கனடாவிலே வாழும் நாம் எமது கலாச்சாரப் பண்புகளோடு மேலைத்தேச மக்களின் பல நல்ல பண்புகளையும் கடைப்பிடித்து வருகிறோம். எந்த நாட்டவர்களிடமும் காணப்படாத சில நல்ல பண்புகளும் நம் கலாச்சாரத்திலே நிறையவேயுள்ளன. நாம் தாயகத்திலே வாழும்போது எமது பல நிகழ்வுகளிலே சிறப்பாகக் கலந்து கொண்டு அவற்றை முழுதாக அனுபவித்தோம். எந்த நிகழ்ச்சிகளை நாம் கொண்டாடினாலும் அவற்றுக்கு காலம், இடம், நேரம் என்பன மிக முக்கியமாகும். சுபகாரியங்களானால் அவற்றுக்குரிய சுபநேரங்களும் குறித்தே கொண்டாடினோம். ஆனால் இன்று புலம் பெயர்ந்த நாடுகளில் மேலை நாட்டவர்களின் சிறந்த பண்புகளில் ஒன்றான குறித்த நேரத்திற்கு செல்வதையும், குறித்த நேரத்தில் நிகழ்வுகளை முடிப்பதுமான “நேரம் பிந்தாமையை” நாம் புறம் தள்ளிவிட்டோம் என்றே தோன்றுகிறது.

முதலில் எம்மக்களால் கொண்டாடப்படும் நிகழ்ச்சிகளுக்கு அழகாக நேரம், காலம், இடம் என்பன அச்சிடப் பெற்று அழைப்பிதழ்கள் மூலமாகவும், சில நிகழ்வுகள் பத்திரிகைகள், வானொலிகள், தொலைக்காட்சிகள் மூலமும் விளம்பரப்படுத்தப்படுகின்றன. ஆனால் பெரும்பாலான நிகழ்வுகள் உரிய நேரத்தில் தொடங்குவதோ, முடிவுறுவதோவில்லை. இதனால் உரிய நேரங்களில் நிகழ்ச்சியை எதிர் பார்த்துச் செல்லும் மக்கள் பலசிக்கலான நிலைகளுக்குள்ளாகிறார்கள். வேலைக்குச் செல்பவர்கள், வீடுகளில் முதியோரைக், குழந்தைகளை விட்டுச் செல்பவர்கள், இன்னும் பல செயற்பாடுகளைச் செய்ய வேண்டியவர்கள், நேர ஒழுங்கின்படி நிகழ்ச்சிகள் நடை பெறாமையால் பல சிரமங்களைச் சந்திக்கின்றனர். நிகழ்ச்சிகளுக்கு வருகை தருவோரில் பலர் உரியநேரத்திற்கு வருகை தராமையால் நிகழ்ச்சிகளை நடத்துபவர்கள் சிலர், மக்களின் வருகைக்காகக் காத்திருந்து நிகழ்ச்சிகளைக் காலதாமதமாகவே தொடங்குகின்றனர். இதனால் குறித்த நேரத்தில் நிகழ்ச்சிகளை முடிக்க முடியாமலும், சில நிகழ்வுகளைக் குறுகிய காலத்தில் செய்து முடிக்க வேண்டிய நிலமையும் ஏற்படுவதோடு, சில நிகழ்வுகளை ரத்துச் செய்யவேண்டிய நிலமைகளும் ஏற்படுகிறது. சில இடங்களில் சில நிகழ்வுகளை நடாத்தும் ஏற்பாட்டாளர்கள் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் தொடங்கும் நேரத்தையோ, அன்றேல் முடிக்கும் நேரத்தையோ கருத்தில் கொள்ளாமல் நிகழ்ச்சிநிரலில் இல்லாத நிகழ்வுகளையோ, பேச்சாளர்களையோ இடையில் சேர்த்துக் கொள்வதாலும் நிகழ்வுக்கான நேரம் அதிகரித்துச் செல்வதால் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் முடிவடையும் நேரம் காலதாமதமாகிப் போகிறது. இதனால் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் சிறப்பாக அமையாமலும், பார்வை யாளர்களுக்குச் சலிப்பும் ஏற்படுகிறது.

இன்று கனடாவில் நம்மவர் மத்தியில் நடைபெறும் பல நிகழ்ச்சிகள் இவ்வாறே நடை பெறுகின்றன. சில நிகழ்வுகளை ஏற்பாடு செய்யும் ஏற்பாட்டாளர்களைக் கூட குறித்த நேரங்களில் மண்டபங்களில் காணமுடியாதிருக்கிறது. இதுமட்டுமன்றித் திருமணம், பூப்பனித நீராட்டு நிகழ்வுகளை எடுத்துக் கொண்டால் மக்களின் வருகையை எதிர்பார்த்து, சிலர் திருமண நிகழ்வுகளைத் தாமதித்தே தொடங்குவதால் உரிய நேரத்தில் செய்யமுடியாது தாமதித்தே கருமங்களையாற்றுகின்றனர். இதில் இன்னும் குறிப்பிடுவதானால் திருமணம் நடை பெறுவதற்கு மூன்று மாதங்களுக்கு முன்னரோ அன்றேல் ஆறுமாதங்களுக்கு முன்னரோ குருக்கள்மார்களிடமோ அல்லது சோதிடர்களிடமோ சென்று சுப நேரங்களைக் கணித்துத் திருமண நிகழ்வுகளைத் தொடங்கும் பெற்றோர் சிலர், நேரத்தைக் கடைப்பிடித்து திருமண காரியங்களை நடாத்தாமையால் சுபநேரம் கழிந்தபின்பே தாலிகட்டு போன்ற சுபகாரியங்களைச் செய்வதையும் காண்கிறோம். இவற்றால் அவர்கள் நினைத்த, தெரிவு செய்த சுப நேரங்கள் கடந்து விடுவதால் பெற்றோருக்கும் உறவினர்க்கும் மனச் சங்கடங்களும் ஏற்படுகின்றன.

நம்மவர் நிகழ்வுகளும், நேரத்தின் முக்கியத்துவமும் தொடர்ச்சி....

திருமணச் சடங்குகளுக்கு வருகை தருவோரும் சிலர் தாம் நினைத்த நேரங்களில் மண்டபத்திற்கு வருகை தருவதால் அவர்களை உபசரிப்போருக்கும் நிகழ்ச்சிகளின் ஒழுங்கமைப்பாளர்களுக்கும் பல சிரமங்களேற்படுகின்றன. சிலவேளைகளில் அந்நிகழ்ச்சிகளில் பங்குபற்றவுள்ள முக்கியஸ்தர்கள் உரிய நேரத்தில் வருகை தராமையாலும் நிகழ்வுகள் கால தாமதமாகின்றன. இவை மட்டுமன்றிச் சில நிகழ்வுகளில் நிகழ்ச்சிகளைத் தொகுத்து வழங்குபவர்களோ, அன்றேல் படப்பிடிப்பாளர்களோ, "வீடியோ" எடுப்பவர்களோ, நேரம் பிந்தி வருவதனாலும் சில நிகழ்வுகள் காலதாமதமாகிவிடுகின்றன. இதனால் அந்நிகழ்வுகளை நேரத்திற்குத் தொடங்கவோ, முடிக்கவோ முடிவதில்லை.

இன்று புலம் பெயர்ந்த நாடான கனடாவிலே பல குடும்ப நிகழ்வுகளும், சமூகநிகழ்வுகளும், அரசியல், பொருளாதாரம் சம்பந்தமான பல நிகழ்வுகளும், பல கருத்தரங்குகளும் நடை பெறுகின்றன. பொதுவாகக் கிழமை முடிவு நாட்களான சனி, ஞாயிறு தினங்களில் பெரும்பாலும் இந் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் இடம் பெற்றுவருகின்றன. இந்நிகழ்வுகளுக்குச் செல்பவர்கள் உரிய நேரத்திற்குச் செல்லாவிட்டால் அவற்றால் ஏற்படும் பயனை, அங்கு அறிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டிய நல்ல கருத்துக்களை ,நல்ல ஆலோசனைகளைப் பெறமுடியாது போய்விடுகிறது. சிலர் சில நிகழ்வுகளுக்குச் செல்லும் போது அறிமுகத்திற்காகவோ, அன்றேல் பங்குபற்றியுள்ளேன் எனக் காட்டும் நோக்கத்துடனோ அல்லது ஏதோ போய்த் தலையைக் காட்டினால் போதுமென நினைத்தோ போகிறார்கள். இதனால் மண்டபங்களுக்குள் இடையில் வருவதும் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் முடிவடைய முன்பே இடையில் செல்வதுமாயிருப்பர். இதனால் இதைப் பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருப்பவர்களுக்குப் பெரும் இடையூறாகவிருக்கும். கனடாவில் வாழ்வோர் பல விதங்களிலும் நேரத்தைப் பயன் படுத்துவதில் முக்கிய கருசனையுடையவர்களாகவேயிருக்க வேண்டியுள்ளது. வேலைக்குப் போகிறவர்கள், அதுவும் காலை, மாலை, மதியம் எனப் பல்வேறு வேலைத் தொடர்களில் பணியாற்ற வேண்டியவர்கள், சனி, ஞாயிறு தினங்களிலும் வேலைக்குச் செல்பவர்கள், லீவுகளை எடுத்துக் கொள்ள முடியாத வேலைகளில் இருப்பவர்கள், ஓய்வு நாட்களில் ஓய்வெடுக்கவேண்டியவர்கள், பல்வேறாகத் தொழில் செய்பவர்களென பல பிரிவுகளில் அடங்குவர். ஆகவே எல்லோரும் எல்லா நாட்களிலும் இந்நிகழ்வுகளில் பங்குபற்றமுடியாத நிலமைகளும் ஏற்படலாம். இன்று கனடாவிலே வாழும் தமிழர்கள் மத்தியிலே பிறந்த நாட் கொண்டாட்டங்கள், பூப்புனித நீராட்டு, திருமணங்கள், திருமண நினைவு நாட்கள், மரணச் சடங்குகள் போன்ற பல குடும்ப நிகழ்வுகளும், சங்கீதம், நடனம், மிருதங்கம் போன்ற பல அரங்கேற்றங்களும், இசைக் கச்சேரிகள், நாடகவிழாக்கள் போன்ற கலை நிகழ்வுகளும், சமூகக் களியாட்ட நிகழ்வுகள் அரசியல், பொருளாதாரம், வர்த்தகம் சம்பந்தமான பல பொதுக் கூட்டங்களும், சமயம், வைத்தியம், சமூகசேவைகள் சம்பந்தமான பல கருத்தரங்குகளும் இடம்பெற்று வருகின்றன. இவற்றுக்குச் செல்ல விரும்புவர்கள் உரிய நேரத்தில் செல்வதும் இவற்றை நடத்துபவர்கள் இந்நிகழ்வுகளை உரியநேரத்தில் தொடங்கி, உரிய நேரத்தில முடிப்பதும் நடத்துபவர்களுக்கும், பங்கு பற்றுபவர்களுக்கும், வசதியும் வாய்பாகவும், பயனள்ளதாகவு மிருக்குமென்பதில் மாற்றுக் கருத்துக்கு இடமேயில்லையெனலாம். இவற்றுள் பொருட் காட்சிகள், வர்த்தகக் கண்காட்சிகள் போன்ற சில நிகழ்வுகளை குறிப்பிட்ட நேரத்திற்குள் எப்பவும் போய்ப் பார்த்துவிட்டுச் செல்லலாம். அதனால் ஏனையோருக்கு எந்த இடைஞ்சலும் ஏற்படாது. ஆனால் குறிப்பிட்ட நேரத்தில் தொடங்கி குறிப்பிட்ட நேரத்தில் முடிவுறும் குறுகிய கால நிகழ்வுகளுக்குக் கட்டாயம் உரிய நேரத்தில் செல்வது அவசியமாகும்.

எந்த ஒரு நிகழ்வையும் ஒழுங்கு படுத்துபவர்கள், அந்நிகழ்வுகளை ஒரு குறிப்பிட்ட நேரத்திற்குத் தொடங்கி ஒரு குறித்த நேரத்தில் முடிப்பதில் அதிக அக்கறை காட்ட வேண்டும். சில நிகழ்வுகளுக்குச் செல்லும் மக்கள் குறித்த நேரத்தில் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் தொடங்காமைபற்றியும், சில நிகழ்வுகள் குறித்த நேரத்தில் முடிவுறாது நீண்டநேரம் செல்வதைப்பற்றியும் வெளியில் செல்லும்போது குறைவாகப் பேசிச் செல்வதையும் காண்கிறோம். இதனால் மக்களிடையே சில நிகழ்வுகள் தொடங்கும் நேரம்பற்றிய ஒரு தப்பான அபிப்பிராயமும் நிலுவுகிறது.

நம்மவர் நிகழ்வுகளும், நேரத்தின் முக்கியத்துவமும் தொடர்ச்சி....

அதாவது வழமையாகச் சில நிகழ்வுகள் உரியநேரத்தில் தொடங்காமையால், **"இந்த நிகழ்ச்சிகள் மாலை ஆறுமணிக்கென்றால் மாலை எட்டு மணிக்குத்தான் தொடங்குவார்கள்."** ஆகவே நாமும் பிந்திப்போவோம் எனவும் கருதுகிறார்கள். இன்றும் கனடாவில் நடைபெறும் சில விழாக்கள் தொடர்ந்து பல ஆண்டுகளாகக் குறித்த நேரத்தில் தொடங்கி குறித்தநேரத்தில் முடிக்கப்படுவதையும் காண்கிறோம். அவற்றை நடத்துபவர்கள் பாராட்டப் படவேண்டியவர்கள். நிகழ்ச்சிகளை ஒழுங்கு செய்பவர்கள் நடை-பெறப்போகும் நிகழ்ச்சிகளுக்கென்றாலென்ன, பேச்சாளர்களுக்கென்றாலென்ன அவர்களுக்கு கொடுக்கப்படும் நேரம் குறிக்கப்படுதலோடு அவற்றை மீறாது கட்டுப்படுத்தவும் வேண்டும். சிலர் தாம் பேச வந்த விடயத்தை விடுத்து தம்மைப்பற்றியோ அன்றேல் வேறு விடயங்களையோ பேசி நேரத்தை நீட்டிச் செல்வதையும் தவிர்த்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். வேலையாகவிருந்தாலென்ன, நேர்முகப் பரீட்சைகளாகவிருந்தாலென்ன, பொது நிகழ்வுகளாக விருந்தாலென்ன, நாம் உரிய நேரத்திற்குச் செல்வதால் எதையும் இழக்கமாட்டோம். ஆனால் நேரம் பிந்திச் செல்வதால் நாம் பலஇடங்களில் பல இழப்புகளைச் சந்திக்க நேரிடலாம்.

நேரத்தின் அருமை குறித்தே நம் முன்னோர்கள் நேரம் பொன் என்றார்கள். எமது வாழ்க்கைச் சுற்றோட்டத்திலும் இன்னதை இன்னநேரத்தில் செய்வதென நேரத்தை ஒழுங்கு படுத்திக் கொள்வதால் பல நன்மைகளைப் பெறக் கூடியதாகவிருக்கும். வைத்தியர்களிடம் நாம் செல்லும்போதும் தரப்படும் மருந்துகளை உரிய நேரங்களில் எடுத்தால்தான் நம் நோய்களுக்கு நிவாரணத்தைப் பெறமுடியும். நிகழ்வுகளை ஒழுங்குபடுத்தும் போது அவற்றிற்கென நேரத்தை முதலில் எடுத்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். குறித்த நேரத்திற்கு நிகழ்ச்சிகளைத் தொடங்கவேண்டும். இடையில் ஒரு நிகழ்வையோ, பேச்சையோ நிறுத்தாது. அவர்களிடம் அவற்றுக்கான நேரத்தை முதலிலேயே கண்டிப்பாகக் கூறிவிட வேண்டும். நேரத்தின் அருமை கருதித்தான் வள்ளுவப்பெருந்தகையும் காலமறிதல் என்னும் அதிகாரத்தில் நேரத்தின் பெருமைபற்றி பத்துக்குறள்களில் விளக்கியுள்ளார்.

அவற்றுள் ஒன்றில்,

"ஞாலங் கருதினும் கைகூடும் காலங்
கருதி மிடத்தாற் செயின்"

எனக் கூறியுள்ளார். அதாவது செய்தற்குரிய காலத்தை ஆராய்ந்து அறிந்து அதனைத் தகுந்த இடத்தோடும் பொருந்தச் செய்ய வல்லானாயின் அவன் உலகம்முழுவதையும் தானே ஆளக் கருதினாலும் அது அவனுக்குக் கைகூடும் என்று கூறியுள்ளார்.

திருக்குறளில் காலம் பற்றி....

பருவத்தோ டொட்ட வொழுக திருவினைத்
தீராமை யார்க்குங்கயிறு

எக்காரியத்தையும் அவ்வவற்றிற்குரிய தக்க காலத்தோடு பொருந்தச் செய்து முடிக்க வேண்டும். அங்ஙனம் காரியமாற்றுதல், ஓரிடத்தும் நில்லாத செல்வத்தைத் தன்னிடமிருந்து நீங்கிப்போய்விடாமல் கட்டிவைக்கும் கயிறாகும்.

அருவினை யென்ப வுளவோ கருவியாற்
காலமறிந்து செயின்.

ஒரு செயலை முடித்தற்குரிய கருவிகளோடு, தக்க காலமும் அறிந்து செய்தால், செய்து முடித்தற்கியலாத அரிய செயல்கள் என்று உலகில் எவையும் உளவோ? இல்லை, எக்காரியத்தையும் முடிக்கலாம்.


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OPPORTUNITIES IN COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY / BIOINFORMATICS

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I present this small note on opportunities in computational biology / bioinformatics with a view of introducing the above topics to the community of graduates of Sri Lankan origin and to stimulate interest and further discussion on the same.

Applying computing power to analyse biological data was first reported in late 1970s, and is well established from the DNA sequencing days of Fred Sanger (Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry 1958 and 1980). The algorithms and programs developed during that time were commonly known as computational applications in biology and can now be considered as the precursor to the current field of computational biology / bioinformatics.

What is computational biology?

Even though computational biology and bioinformatics are commonly used as alternate terms, there are subtle differences between the two. Computational Biology is generally defined as the development and application of data-analytical and theoretical methods, mathematical modeling and computational simulation techniques to the study of biological, behavioral, and social systems. The field is broadly defined and includes foundations in computer science, applied mathematics, statistics, biochemistry, chemistry, biophysics, molecular biology, genetics, ecology, evolution, anatomy, neuroscience, and visualization.

Bioinformatics is defined as research, development, or application of computational tools and approaches for expanding the use of biological, medical, behavioral or health data, including those to acquire, store, organize, archive, analyze, or visualize such data. In practice, computational biology looks at the grand schemes of things while the bioinformatics deals with the nuts and bolts of the field.

Why computational biology?

In 1990, the Human genome sequencing project, identifying all the nucleotide bases that make up the whole human genome (about 3.4 billion base pairs), including the 23 pairs of chromosomes and other components, was started. The size of the human genome can be appreciated from the following statement:

"If our strands of DNA were stretched out in a line, the 46 chromosomes making up the human genome would extend more than six feet. If the length of the 100 trillion cells could be stretched out, it would be over 113 billion miles. That is enough material to reach to the sun and back 610 times."- Source: Centre for Integrated Genomics.

Even though a working draft of the genome was announced in 2000, detailed analysis of the data is still not complete. Like the idiom, *"Necessity is the mother of invention"* implies, the need to analyse this vast amount of data has contributed to the rapid development of the computational biology field.

OPPORTUNITIES IN COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY CONTD....

With the advent of new sequencing technologies called Next generation Sequencing (NGS) the sequencing costs have come down significantly over the years. Currently a human genome can be sequenced for \$5000- \$8000, while the first human genome sequencing costs were roughly around \$150 million. Due to reduction in costs and ubiquitous availability of technologies, the amount of data being produced from sequencing has grown into gigantic proportions and there is a growing demand to manage and make sense of this vast amount of data. This has given fresh impetus to the development and practice of computational biology.

In 1990s, from analysing fragments of DNA (about 300 - 1000 base pairs) for many days, the field has currently matured into analyse and interpret multiple human and other genomes within a day by employing parallel computing (high performance computing clusters) architecture.

Where and how is computational biology used?

Computational biology is being practised in research and in production (clinical, agricultural and environmental, bio-defence) areas. It allows one to identify new genes, new proteins, new organisms, variation in the genetic makeup (mutations), and variation in micro-flora in food and in environment. In health sciences, new biomarkers that predict diseases, identifying emerging pathogens causing novel infections and patterns of infections and spread are identified by employing computational biology.

Some of the major research centres in the world that focuses mainly in computational biology are

European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) in Cambridge, UK

Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (WTSI) in Cambridge, UK

National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), USA

Broad Institute of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University, USA

Every country in the world has made significant investments into the development and application of computational biology. In Canada, Genome Canada and Compute Canada have multiple programs to support the field and Toronto is considered as one of the regional hub in the advancement of computational biology in North America.

Sub disciplines

The major sub disciplines of the field are given here for the interested users to explore more on these.

Sequence (DNA/RNA/Protein) similarity analysis (individual, pair-wise, multiple, comparative)

Genome assembly/re-alignment, annotation and analysis

Sequence variant analysis (SNP/V, InDels, CNV, Structural variants)

Gene expression and regulation, Protein expression (Microarray) and Gene networks

Computational evolutionary biology

Structure and functional prediction - Chromatin, RNA, Protein

Protein-Protein Interactions, Interaction networks and Pathway analysis

Modelling biological systems (systems biology) - host or/and pathogen

OPPORTUNITIES IN COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY CONTD....

What are the opportunities?

Currently the focus in biological and medical sciences is moving away from looking at a specific gene or gene product (mRNA or protein) to approach the problem domain in a systemic manner, leading to "System Biology". This again leads to vast amount of data generation and accompanying issues of data handling.

Recently, the concept of personal medicine is brought into health care as a new paradigm in managing diseases of a person. What it entails is each person need to be treated uniquely, not only considering the pathogen or the system flaws that contribute to the disease state, but also the genetic makeup of the person and interactions between those factors. This again leads to the generation and handling of vast amount of diverse types of data.

Thus the opportunities for growth of the computational biology field are very promising with the simultaneous growth of computing power and the growth in biological data generation.

How to get into computational biology

The computational biology field is currently populated by two different types of people. One, people who have basic education in natural or health sciences (MSc/PhD in molecular biology or MD) with advanced skills in computing and statistics (Master's degree). The other type is of people with basic education in quantitative sciences (MSc/PhD in Computing, Physics, Mathematics, Statistics, Electrical engineering, Electronic engineering) and additional skills or interests in biology.
For entry level, a very good under-graduate degree in any of the above fields with some post-graduate education and willingness and eagerness to work on the inter-disciplinary interface is generally required.

Skills in the following areas allow a person to productively flourish in computational biology: molecular biology, immunology, statistics, computer programming, databases, data integration, computer system and networks, system designs and architecture, and project management.

More Information

The following web sites can be useful to get more information:

- International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB) - http://www.iscb.org/
- Bioinformatics Organization - Bioinformatics.Org - http://www.bioinformatics.org/
- PLoS Computational Biology - http://www.ploscompbiol.org/home.action
- Canadian Bioinformatics Workshops - http://www.bioinformatics.ca/
- Genome Canada - http://www.genomecanada.ca/

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JOURNALISM AS A CAREER CHOICE

By: Kumutha Ramanathan, M.Sc. (Columbia Graduate School ofJournalism, New York), Honours B.A. (University of Toronto, St. George).
Kumutha is a television reporter with CTV Calgary.



In the digital age where everyone from pundits to interest groups claim to be the most authoritative sources on any given topic online, the need for unbiased news has become even more pronounced. For this reason, it is important for those aspiring to join one of the oldest and respected professions in the world gain a fundamental understanding of what the future holds for the industry.

This begins with a good grasp of the multiplicity of options that lay before any young person on the cusp of career greatness. The local reporter penciling notes on a murder may also be tasked with gathering information for radio and television platforms, for instance. Similarly, a television reporter who is normally preoccupied with gathering clips for a broadcast piece may also be on deadline for a print story. The key to success for any journalist in the 21st century should be versatility.

With this goal in mind, immersing one's self with technical skills is paramount. Whether you choose the college or university route, always do your homework prior to applying for a postgraduate program. Visit local schools you may be interested in and ask in-depth questions about the course curriculum. You should walk away from any informational meeting with a clear idea about how much time a typical student spends learning theory in the classroom, gaining technical training and field experience. The latter can include internships, volunteer work or even a part-time job.

Do not get bogged down in superficial measures, such as weighing the pros and cons of one school's reputation over another. The beauty of the journalism craft is that it is largely a meritocracy, where those who want to succeed always find a way to shine. Find the program or training that best suits your learning style.

In researching prospective schools, also consider their eligibility requirements. Many journalism programs at the college and university level in Canada now require students to demonstrate a sustained interest in the field by submitting a portfolio. This will show your range and depth of work. Typically, schools ask for three to four of your best pieces. In order to have a portfolio ready for application time, begin embracing the craft as early a possible in your high school career.

Generally speaking, the prominence of the publication or news agency you produce pieces for does not matter as much as the quality of your work. You are not expected to be a master of the craft straight out of high school. Otherwise, you would not need any formal training!

Those who are interested in a niche career covering business journalism or politics, for instance, should consider gaining a strong theoretical background. An undergraduate degree in business or political science will lend itself to more critical analysis down the line. The technical skills required to perform as a journalist can then be learned through volunteer work at a school publication or via an internship.

JOURNALISM AS A CAREER CHOICE - CONTD

Whether you are in a formalized journalism program or not, capitalize on field experience through summer internships. Cold call a newsroom and inquire about summer opportunities. Mention you are interested in gaining experience and want to be considered for unpaid and paid positions. Also offer to come in for a preliminary meeting. Finally, have a polished resume and a portfolio with at least two pieces to demonstrate your talent.

When you enter any newsroom, strive to offer story ideas that go against the grain. Mainstream media has a tendency to chase the same stories. If you have insight on a particular community or know a lot about any given topic, let your "expertise" shine. You will set yourself apart from your colleagues!

Even in a hypercompetitive field like journalism, jobs abound. While we hear stories of news agencies closing or downsizing, those who are passionate will excel. Never close yourself off to a job that could lead to other great opportunities. Good luck! ✸


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2000	S. Sivanesan	C. Ramanathan	A. Rasaratnam
2001	S. Sivanesan	C. Ramanathan	K. Kanthasamy
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